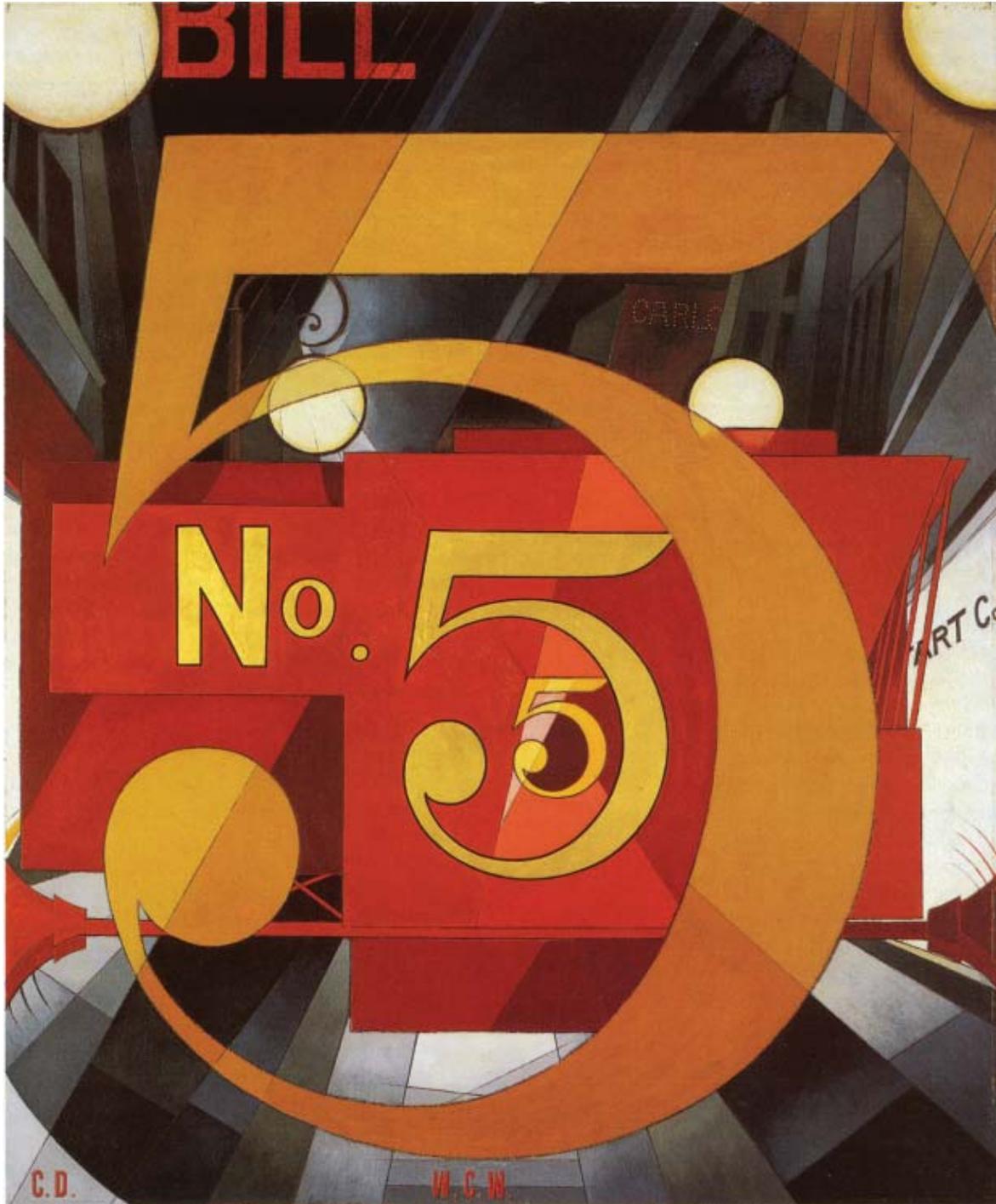


On Common Ground

Strengthening Teaching through School-University Partnership

YALE-NEW HAVEN TEACHERS INSTITUTE

NUMBER 5, FALL 1995



CHARLES HENRY DEMUTH, I SAW THE FIGURE 5 IN GOLD, 1928

Partnership and the Arts

On Common Ground: Learning Through the Arts

By Thomas R. Whitaker

We celebrate the publication of Number 5 of *On Common Ground* by featuring on the cover Charles Demuth's poster-portrait *I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold*, a superb instance of collaboration in the arts. This number contains much more evidence that the arts are closely related acts of imagination. Maxine Greene, for example, when commenting on the powers of metaphor, refers to Wallace Stevens' poem "The Man with the Blue Guitar," in which an image derived from Picasso's "The Old Guitarist" becomes a symbol of poetic activity. In Rosa Citlali Zamora's poem "A Reader, a Writer," a writer is "a person who paints" and a reader is one "who sees the colorless picture." As a reader of this number you may easily find or construct yet other examples. When I first saw the *Collaborative Quilt of Transformation* on which Helen Seigel comments, I was struck by how it translates into visual terms the "transformation" exercises that can help theater groups discover their unity in diversity.

We have taken such collaboration and reciprocity as one of our themes because it leads into another: the learning that may occur through our study and practice of the arts. Some essays here offer justifications for such learning, or ask why the arts are nowadays so often mistakenly considered "frills" when we ought to rank them among the "basics." Other essays speak of the kinds of learning through the arts that university-school partnerships have attempted and achieved. And we also present instances of the art by students that has emerged from such partnerships.

A third theme might best be put as questions: If the arts are activities of an imagination that precedes and transcends our "logical" and "factual" discourse, may they not help us to re-imagine what we mean by education? Can they provide us with means or media for a badly needed rethinking of education at every level? If so, can we continue to regard them as separate items in an established curriculum? Shouldn't we place them at the very heart of a newly imagined course of study?

The Essays: Some Connections

- In what ways are the arts central to learning? How can we bring them closer to the center of our educational practice? Maxine Greene, Scott T. Massey, and Elliot W. Eisner offer three ways of approaching those questions. Maxine Greene shows us how the "metaphor" and, more generally, the "imagination" can orient us toward possibility, toward meanings in our experience that we have not yet articulated, and toward the realization of community in our schools and in a democratic society. For her, metaphorical thought is important to students, to teachers, and to educational reformers who would implement some of the principles that John Dewey laid down. Scott T. Massey proposes that the arts are

a fundamental model for knowing and learning, one that is increasingly important for the emerging "knowledge society." For him, the arts constitute a major "symbol system" and a field of creative inquiry that should be central to a new and integrated curriculum. Elliott W. Eisner examines more closely the reasons why the arts are at present marginalized in our schools. That is so, he concludes, because of unrecognized prejudices about the nature of the mind that are ingrained in our culture and legitimized by our universities. He proposes not just a philosophical re-orientation but a significant revision in college admissions requirements.

- How can a university-school partnership encourage learning through the arts? The
(continued on page 4)

About the cover illustration: Charles Demuth's poster-portrait of 1928, *I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold*, is a response to a poem by his friend William Carlos Williams that we reprint here. Williams has described the poem's occasion, a July evening when he was stopping by the New York studio of another artist-friend, Marsden Hartley. "As I approached his number I heard a great clatter of bells and the roar of a fire engine passing the end of the street down Ninth Avenue. I turned just in time to see a golden figure 5 on a red background flash by. The impression was so sudden and forceful that I took a piece of paper out of my pocket and wrote a short poem about it."

THE GREAT FIGURE

Among the rain
and lights
I saw the figure 5
in gold
on a red
firetruck
moving
tense
unheeded
to gong clangs
siren howls
and wheels rumbling
through the dark city.

Demuth's painting translates the poem's verbal images, swift motion, and balanced composition into a cubist/futurist design. Whereas the poem leads us forward through a sentence balanced on its central word, "moving," the painting pulls us into its space by way of receding figures and convergent lines. Here the image of urban vitality also expands to become a general tribute to Williams and to art. We find "BILL" on a billboard, "carlos" in lights on a theatre marquee, "ART Co" on a store window, and the initials of both painter and poet at the bottom of the design.

Partnership and the Arts

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Credits: Cover Illustration: Charles Henry Demuth. *I Saw The Figure 5 in Gold*. 1928. Oil on composition board. 36" x 29 3/4". The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949. **Page 2:** William Carlos Williams. *Collected Poems, 1909-1939, Volume 1*. ©1938. New Directions Publishing Corporation. **Page 4:** Mary Cassatt. *The Banjo Lesson*. 1894. Pastel on paper. 28" x 22 1/2". Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Richmond, Virginia. The Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund. Photograph © 1993 Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. **Page 5:** Sarouen Sim. *Untitled*. Grade 3. 1995. Jackson Elementary School. Santa Ana, California. **Page 6:** Designed by Hyemeyohsts Storm and Karin Harris. Painted by Karin Harris. *Vision Shield*. 1972. Reproduced from *Seven Arrows* by Hyemeyohsts Storm. Harper & Row. New York. 1972. **Page 9:** Olivia Nam. *Sombreros*. Grade 5. 1995. J.F. Kennedy Elementary School. Santa Ana, California. **Page 11:** Joseph Wright of Derby. *A Philosopher Giving the Lecture on the Orrery*. Exhibited 1766. Oil on canvas. 58 cm. x 80 cm.. Derby Museum and Art Gallery. Derby, England. **Page 12:** F. Bedford. *Moresque No. 5*. Plate XLIII in Owen Jones' *The Grammar of Ornament*. 1856. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. **Page 13:** Photograph by Erica Baum, 1993. **Page 16:** Special Studio Students from Diamond Elementary School. Grades 3-5. *Collaborative Quilt of Transformation*. 1995. 44" x 36". Santa Ana, California. **Page 17:** Octavio Iniquez. Grade 4. Detail from *Collaborative Quilt of Transformation*. 1995. 8" x 8". Diamond Elementary School. Santa Ana, California. **Page 19:** Photograph by Howard Englander. Saint Joseph Ballet Company. **Page 22:** Josef Albers. *Encircled*. 1933. Woodcut. 9 1/2" x 13 1/2". Josef and Anni Albers Foundation. **Page 26:** Natalie Pedroza. *Building a Tree House Where We Can Play*. Grade 4. 1995. 8" x 10". Harvey Elementary School. Santa Ana, California. **Page 28:** William Sidney Mount. *The Novice*. 1847. 29 7/8" x 24 7/8". Oil on canvas. The Museums at Stony Brook. Stony Brook, Long Island. Museum purchase, 1962. **Page 30:** Huyva Tanikawa. *Untitled*. Grade 1. 1995. Jackson Elementary School. Santa Ana, California. **Page 32:** Sergio Roman. *Stop! Save the Whales*. Grade 3. 1995. 8" x 10". Harvey Elementary School. Santa Ana, California.

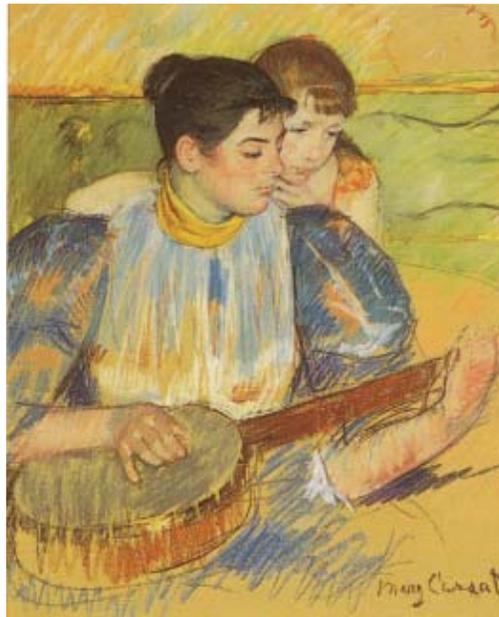
Whitaker: the Arts

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cluster of pieces “From the New Haven Experience” offers a provocative sampling. Because *On Common Ground* was not conceived as a vehicle for promulgating the activities of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, we have made few references to them in previous issues. This seems an appropriate time, however, to look at selected seminars that illustrate various approaches to the arts. Jules David Prown describes his seminars on the analysis of a wide range of artifacts as “fragments of history that embody the culture that produced them.” Kent C. Bloomer tells how he has introduced the nature of architecture to teachers mainly from primary and middle schools, enabling a variety of interdisciplinary projects, and setting the stage for collaboration on an architectural project in one of the schools. I lay out something of my own education as a seminar leader, emphasizing how the participatory medium of theater can relate to some issues posed by our diverse society. Paul H. Fry and Jean E. Sutherland then recount their experience with a team effort at L. W. Beecher Elementary School, through which a seminar in lyric poetry led to an international fiesta involving teachers, administrators, children, and parents. We also include a poem written by Narkita Spearman during that project.

- How may works by a group of students be combined in a project that uses photography, oil pastel, and mixed media collage, and that provides a vehicle for critical thinking, exploration, invention, reinterpretation, and collaboration? The *Collaborative Quilt of Transformation* created at Diamond Elementary School under the leadership of Helen Seigel, Artist-in-the-Schools in the Santa Ana Unified School District, is a striking example of such an effort. Helen Seigel’s account makes clear how artistic, conceptual, and social values played their roles in the complex process that produced the quilt.
- What roles may dance programs play in school partnerships with universities and artistic groups? Jill Beck and Marty Trujillo offer two quite different answers, each emphasizing social as well as artistic values. The Dallas/Fort Worth project that Jill Beck describes, initiated by the Dance Division

at Southern Methodist University with support from the U.S. Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, involved undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty at the university level, partnerships with the schools, after-school programs, and the development of a multimedia CD-ROM. Here dance was approached within a context that includes history and geography, and with attention to a variety of analytical and performance skills. The Saint Joseph Ballet described by Marty Trujillo might seem more narrowly focused upon dance training, but it too is con-



MARY CASSATT, *THE BANJO LESSON*, 1894

cerned with wider issues. Making its home in a Latino enclave in downtown Santa Ana, the Ballet is supported by partnerships with school districts, businesses, and the communities themselves, and a crucial link to the University of California at Irvine. Its aim is to provide dance training to inner city youths “as a means of preventing delinquency, building self-esteem, teaching new skills, and ultimately changing their lives.”

- Several other essays deal with the art of writing and its relations to learning and living. Even though “writing” has always been recognized as a “basic” subject, the teaching profession has long failed to

grasp its fundamental relation to learning. James Gray and Richard Sterling set forth the specific response to that situation by the Bay Area Writing Project and describe its transformation into the National Writing Project. They make clear how the Writing Project has encouraged the preparation of teacher-leaders, turned teachers into writers, and promoted teacher research. And they offer it, finally, as a model of teacher-based reform. Laura J. Roop and Laura Schiller, teacher-leaders in the National Writing Project, amplify this account by sharing their own experiences. Each of them lets us see how the process of writing poetry can become both an occasion and a metaphor “for making and revising our professional and personal lives.”

- Colleen M. Fairbanks, also concerned with writing as occasion and metaphor, approaches this matter from another angle. She describes her work for the University of Michigan’s Center for Educational Innovation in facilitating collaborations with the schools that were aimed at the exploration of literacy, teaching, and teaming. Her own teaming with Kathie Smith, an English teacher at Saginaw High School, led to a cross-age and cross-school project in which the writing and reading of stories opened up larger questions of the narrative forms of our lives—for both the students and the teachers. Colleen Fairbanks has therefore come to see collaboration itself “as a kind of lived story.”
- Susan Pearson-Davis, moving from narrative to drama, offers a yet more expansive version of that kind of story. She recounts the history of Wrinkle Writing, which began with her directing of a stage adaptation of Madeleine L’Engle’s *A Wrinkle in Time*, developed into a relationship between the University of New Mexico Department of Theatre and Dance and elementary and secondary language arts teachers (building there on the Rio Grande Writing Project), and resulted in an intergenerational project that includes

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Metaphors and Possibility

By Maxine Greene

“The Possible’s slow fuse is lit by the Imagination.”

Emily Dickinson

The fuse may be slow because of the ways in which the imaginative capacity has been ignored. In the many education reports that have appeared in recent years, imagination plays no part. In plans for cooperative work among teachers and professors, the stress is on pragmatic issues: standards, disciplines, benchmarks, approaches to assessment. The exclusion of metaphor and imagination from projects for reconstruction cannot be due to a lack of acquaintance with literature and other arts. Old dualisms, old oppositions seem to persist when education is talked about: the subjective is opposed to the objective, the affective to the cognitive. People feel compelled to use the flat language of the social sciences when they make proposals about young people, especially those different from themselves. They try to be cool, empirical, “objective” when deciding how diverse youth ought to come together, to be initiated into a common world. The manageable and the predictable become important, not the unmeasurable and the merely possible. We might recall Wallace Stevens and his rendering of that metaphor for imagination—the “blue guitar”:

They said, “You have a blue guitar,
You do not play things as they are.”

The man replied, “Things as they are
Are changed upon the blue guitar.”

And they said then, “But play, you must,
A tune beyond us, yet ourselves,

A tune upon the blue guitar
Of things exactly as they are.”

Those who demand a rendering of “things exactly as they are” often assume an objective reality that can and should be precisely captured. To use imagination is to summon up an “as/if”, to look at things as if they could be otherwise. This does not deny firm evidence of what is “real” and “true.” It does, however, enable us to break with the one-dimensional vision, to look towards what might or what ought to be. Clearly, this is troubling to those who seek the comfort of the familiar. For others, however, it signifies an end to submission to the taken-for-granted, to what has seemed inescapably “given”: the “bell curve” rendering of human intelligence; the inevitability of poverty; the tie between material success and merit. It often takes metaphorical thinking to break with old certainties in this way, whether we realize it fully or reflect on what it means.

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The Arts as Knowing

By Scott T. Massey

The inclusion of the arts in the new national goals and standards provides an excellent opportunity to reinvestigate the role of art in the process of learning. More than simply achieving—at last—admission into the pantheon of the “basic” school curriculum, the inclusion of the arts in the national standards is an invitation to teachers, specialists, artists, community leaders, and education reformers to look more carefully at the arts as a form of cognition.

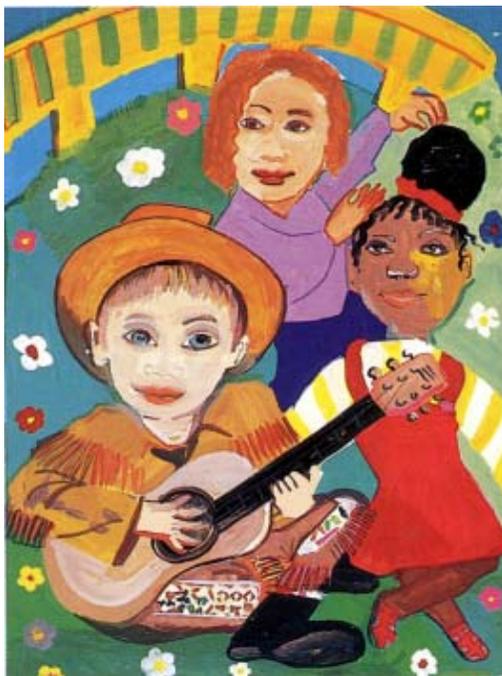
For the arts have significant structures which are often neglected in favor of so-called “affective” qualities. The arts are a powerful symbol system, like that of number and language; they are multi-sensory and engage multiple forms of intelligence; they employ distinctive, non-linear forms of thinking and problem-solving; and they create some of our most powerful forms of symbolic communication.

Indeed, new understandings of knowing and learning, and even new economic trends, are coming together to support the idea that the arts are a fundamental model of knowing and learning. Far from being peripheral to the basic business of learning and knowing in school, the arts embody processes of thinking and learning that are central to the new types of “knowers” needed for the emerging “knowledge society”. Viewed from this vantage point, the arts may not only join other subjects in the “core” curriculum, but take a central place. In this essay, I would like to sketch some of the reasons for this claim.

Economic changes are perhaps the most obvious factors reshaping education at the present time. It is now a commonplace to note that American schools are still basically organized on an industrial model developed in the last century to prepare people to work in the industrial economy. A new economic order is now emerging, however, and this economic order is based on information and knowledge, not on materials and manufacturing. Aware of this, American corporations have taken a leading role in insisting on restructuring schools to adapt them to the needs of the emerging “knowledge” economy and society.

In *The Work of Nations*, Robert Reich argues that whatever one’s job title may be, there are now only three job functions that are economically meaningful—routine production workers, in-person service providers, and what he calls “symbol analysts.” Symbol analysts are the new workers of the knowledge economy, who create

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SAROEUN SIM, UNTITLED, 1995

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value through the analysis of symbols (information), the traditions of design, and the creation of new ideas. According to Reich, the work of the symbol analyst is the engine driving the new emerging global economy.

The kind of skills needed by symbol analysts are quite different from the skills needed by the workers and managers of the industrial era. The “new basics” being demanded by the new economy are skills that are centered in design, communication, and learning. Walter Wriston, former CEO of Citibank has written, “information is the new raw material of wealth and opportunity...sorting out opportunities from an overwhelming flow of information is now the prime responsibility of any good management” (*The Decline of Sovereignty*). In other words, the ability to learn, to discern patterns, interest points, and other qualities of creative design are key skills for the information age.

From this brief sketch, we see that economic forces connected with the emerging knowledge society are creating a need for a “new basics” for schools. These new basics are not simply higher-order thinking skills but different order thinking skills. These skills relate to communication and design—to creating value through the creation of meaning—and this is at the heart of the creative process of the arts. Also fundamental in this new economic order is the ability to continue to learn—to love learning—and again, the creative process is a basic model for continuous, highly-motivated learning.

Reflecting on learning carries us into the next area to look at new understandings about the nature of knowledge.

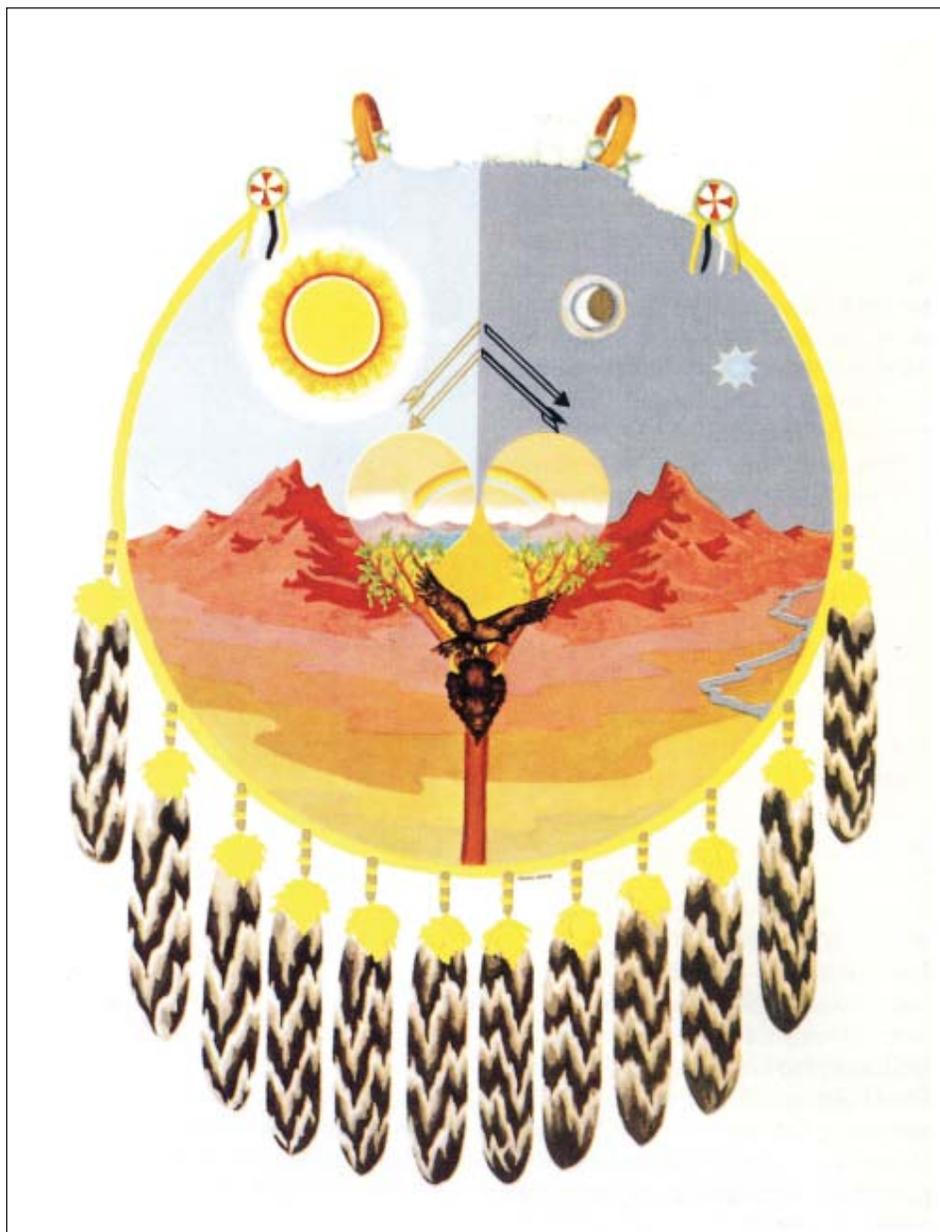
For at least the past 400 years in the West, we have entertained the view that knowledge is stable, sequential, provable, and finite. Sir Isaiah Berlin has given a succinct statement of this viewpoint in the *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*. According to Berlin, we have believed that “a) to all genuine questions there is one true answer and one only...b) that the true answers to such questions are in principle knowable;

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with each other...according to some they form a logical system each ingredient of which logically entails and is entailed by all the other elements” (p. 209). This view of knowledge has provided the framework for thinking about schools and curriculum.

Contrast with this view our new understandings of knowledge as a dynamic, changing system. Instead of speaking of “knowledge”, in fact, it might be better to speak of “knowing”. This emphasizes the

on-going activity involved. Instead of seeing knowledge as a sequentially constructed building based on a foundation of “basic” truth and knowledge, we are now realizing that knowledge is a dynamic and ever-expanding field. The process of knowing, likewise, is not a passive storage of information and skill, but an active, creative process. Even in math and science—the old bastions of stable, building-block knowledge—we find evidence of continuous rethinking, re-drawing of conceptual lines, and creative



DESIGNED BY HYEMEOHSTS STORM AND KARIN HARRIS, PAINTED BY KARIN HARRIS, VISION SHIELD, 1972

large-scale revisions of the type described by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

In other areas, cognitive psychology is revealing to us more about the role of the mind in the active construction of knowledge and experience. We are just beginning to understand how dynamic the relation between the knower and the known truly is. Information theory and complexity theory are also adding to the picture with powerful new tools for understanding systems that are not simple, linear systems. Learning and knowing are themselves examples of complex, non-linear systems, and we are just now beginning to have the conceptual tools to understand them appropriately.

The educational “bottom line” to all these new understandings about the nature of knowing is that the old academic categories about subjects and about curriculum construction no longer make sense. The student of today faces a vast universe of knowledge that is not only larger in scale than that of the past, but is also in a state of dynamic change. Knowledge is growing exponentially, theories are continuously reshaped, and cultures and disciplines are intersecting and interacting in new and unpredictable ways. It no longer makes practical sense, nor is it intellectually sound to approach the curriculum as we have in the past.

Ernest Boyer recently said in this journal, “The truth is that the old academic boxes do not fit the new intellectual questions. Some of the most exciting work going on in the academy today is in the ‘hyphenated disciplines’—in bioengineering and psycho-linguistics and the like—in what Michael Polanyi calls the ‘overlapping academic neighborhoods.’”

Boyer goes on to say, “During the coming decades, we will see a fundamental reshaping of the typology of knowledge as profound as that which occurred in the nineteenth century....And wouldn’t it be tragic if a nineteenth-century curriculum design continued to be imposed on schools at the very time scholars were redefining the structure of knowledge for the twenty-first century?... Wouldn’t it be exciting, as we move toward

the next century, if we would start to rethink the nature of the new knowledge that related not to the last century but to the coming century? How can we organize knowledge in a way that seems to make it relevant and powerful for students in the days ahead? Wouldn’t it be exciting if both kindergarten teachers and college professors could view knowledge using understandable categories that would be newly integrated and would spiral upward in common discourse?” (Summer 1994, p.11).

This reshaping of the “typology of knowledge” that Boyer speaks of will include the arts. The arts will be repositioned in the new intellectual landscape. The opportunity now exists for the arts to reexamine themselves as a form of thinking and knowing, and to assume a central intellectual role in schools of the knowledge society. The

The old academic categories no longer make sense.

arts as a creative process provide, I believe, a unique standpoint for the construction of a new curriculum that addresses the new “basics” of the knowledge society and is true to the “new typology of knowledge” to which Boyer refers.

I would add to Boyer’s list of tantalizing questions, Wouldn’t it be exciting to include creative artists in the process of reshaping schools? Wouldn’t it be exciting to design ways to incorporate the arts and the creative process of art-making into new, non-sequential curricula that are created proactively by teachers and students? Wouldn’t it be exciting to rethink the nature of learning so that the creative, constructive process that we now see to be the basis of knowing would become dominant in the teaching and learning process in schools? Wouldn’t it be exciting to shift our focus in schools from “knowledge transmission and storage” to “knowledge understanding and creation”—from knowledge *acquisition* to *generating and creating* knowledge?

Looking at knowing as a creative, constructive process leads us to consider how the arts themselves may be viewed as a form of knowing.

To look at the arts as a fundamental form of knowing and learning is to look at the arts in a different way from that usually accepted. Of course, the arts may be approached validly from many different perspectives. On the one hand, the arts may be viewed as a formal discipline or training to be given to develop individual, specialized talents. Programs that give a primary value to performance skills focus on this approach. In addition, the arts may be viewed as historical artifacts that figure in a special history—the history of art; they may be viewed from the point of view of the many forms of arts criticism as the data for critical analysis as works of art; and they may be viewed as data and examples for the many different theories of aesthetics that have been developed.

On the other hand, the arts may be viewed as a symbol system—like language and numbers are symbol systems—that has been created as a mode of knowing. Number systems have been created to help us describe certain features of the world that are invisible without numbers. Language is another symbol system that has been created to help us delineate features of experience and the world. Artistic symbols are another symbol system—non-verbal and non-mathematical—that demarcate otherwise invisible features of the world and our experience. Symbols act like the contour lines of the map-maker to delineate features of the world. They stabilize, fix, give direction and meaning to the “blooming buzz” of experience. A subject comes to know through the act of creating and manipulating symbols in the mapping of experience.

From this perspective, the arts are a major symbol system and a basic form of knowing. A work of art represents an artist’s attempt to map some experience in forms that capture the essence of the experience and communicate it to others. The artistic process, then, is seen as a continuous process of
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Massey: The Arts as Knowing

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noticing, symbolization, re-attending, and revision.

At the classroom level, viewing the arts as a symbol system and form of knowing/learning would involve students in their own process of noticing, creating, viewing works of art, reflecting, and documenting their own process of experience and discovery.

Perhaps the best way to conclude is with a flight of fancy. Lynn Olson has written in a recent issue of *Education Week* (November 2, 1994) that “reformers not only have to reach large numbers of schools and teachers and citizens, they must also change people’s fundamental conceptions of what good teaching and learning look like.” Developing this vision of how new schools will look is perhaps the most difficult barrier to real school reform. The changes coming for our economy, our society, and our schools are hard to visualize. But looking from the vantage of the arts, let us imagine what schools could be.

Imagine schools in which works of art and other “worthy objects of study” are made directly available to students as rich and challenging primary source materials for active investigations. Imagine multimedia and telecommunications making these resources available instantly across time and space for young people in schools. Imagine these rich materials being the “gateways” or “anchors” for integrated curricula that help students make connections among ideas and disciplines. Imagine an on-going series of aesthetic experiences permeating the learning process and motivating curiosity and discovery. Imagine schools in which teachers and students collaborate in the design of the curricular projects and investigations that spiral out of the rich source materials of the arts. Imagine schools in which student work is itself regarded as a “work of art”—that is, student learning is grounded in creative inquiry, then artfully rendered into Process Portfolios that tell the story of the learner’s journey with power and beauty. Imagine schools that support reflection and real intellectual growth for their faculties, and which support students in reflecting on their own work and growth. Imagine schools that have broken the glass

walls between the school and the community to become centers of learning through which artists, artworks from cultural organizations, researchers, academic leaders and other experts from science, math, history, business, etc., flow.

The Leonard Bernstein Center, a national research and development center that uses the arts and technology as a new approach to learning, is working to refine visions like this, and to translate such visions into reality. Beginning with a five year research project in one K-6 public school (the Eakin School), the Bernstein Center is now in the second stage of design for its school programs. Ten public schools—from K-12—are involved in a two year project to develop concrete models of reform shaped by the Center’s five core strategies. Experts in math and science from Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, artists from local cultural institutions and universities, top staff from Metro Nashville Public Schools are all involved in planning and design for this project.

At the school level, each school has a Design Team of teachers, parents, and the principal who work to develop the overall plan for the school. Each school also has a Focus Classroom that receives weekly in-class consultation and support from Artistic Design Consultants from the Center. From this two-year project, a national network of like-minded teachers and schools will be initiated, with model curricula, assessment tools, models for the use of art and technology, and models for teacher professional development and reflection drawn from the work of these ten schools.

Leonard Bernstein knew the power of the arts to reach people and to stimulate learning—he embodied and symbolizes this power. The Bernstein Center represents a magnificent opportunity to transmit Bernstein’s educational legacy into a living legacy for our schools. The new economic forces of the knowledge society and the new understandings of knowledge support a central role for the arts in learning. Leonard Bernstein is the perfect symbol for catalyzing these forces into a coherent vision and action. The Bernstein Center is dedicated to this mission.

Whitaker: the Arts

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the professional development of teachers of playwriting, a portfolio competition and special workshops for their students, a performance troupe for teachers who want intensive immersion in drama, and the showcasing of short works written and performed by students who have been in the performance troupe. This story comes full circle with Pearson-Davis’s noting of the unexpected benefits that the collaboration has brought to faculty and students at the University of New Mexico in several programs.

- The two pieces in our department “Voices from the Classroom” sum up a number of our continuing themes. Sharon Floyd sets forth her revitalizing experience, as a teacher of writing, in projects led by the University of Michigan’s Center for Educational Improvement through Collaboration. Sharon A. Olguin describes her work with artist-teachers who were committed to the view that the arts can inform the study of other subjects, raise the students’ self-esteem, and develop their critical thinking and creative abilities.
- Finally, the poem by Rosa Citlali Zamora, an eleven-year-old from Albuquerque, New Mexico, succinctly traces writing and reading, painting and seeing, to their roots in our shared imagination.

The Images: Some Perspectives

The images in this issue remind us that art is a scene of collaboration and learning. The cover and center-fold on which I’ve already commented, *The Figure 5 in Gold* and the *Collaborative Quilt of Transformation*, may suggest the range. Along with the quilt we reproduce on page 17 a detail by Octavio Iniquez of Grade 4 that constitutes one moment in the process of imaginative transformation.

Elsewhere in these pages we juxtapose the work of professional artists with that of students. Maxine Greene’s allusion to Stevens’ “The Man With the Blue Guitar” might have called for Picasso’s rather sombre old guitarist, but we have chosen instead, for pages 4 and 5, two refreshing images of music that

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Why the Arts are Marginalized in Our Schools: One More Time

By Elliot W. Eisner

That one must make the case that students should be given significant opportunities to work within and to experience the arts is itself a telling commentary on our conception of education or on our values. Yet, almost ceaselessly that case must be made—and more often than not unsuccessfully. When push comes to shove, when budgets are to be cut the arts are among the most likely candidates. Given the fact that we build palaces to house them, erect concert halls to hear them, construct theaters to see them, pay performers of the arts fortunes to provide them, why the discrepancy between our out-of-school behavior and our in-school priorities?

One reason that we seldom entertain is that while we believe the arts to be important, they are simply not well taught in school. Most elementary teachers know little about the arts and often trivialize them in their classrooms. Parents sense this and vote with their feet; they want their children engaged in more substantive experiences in school.

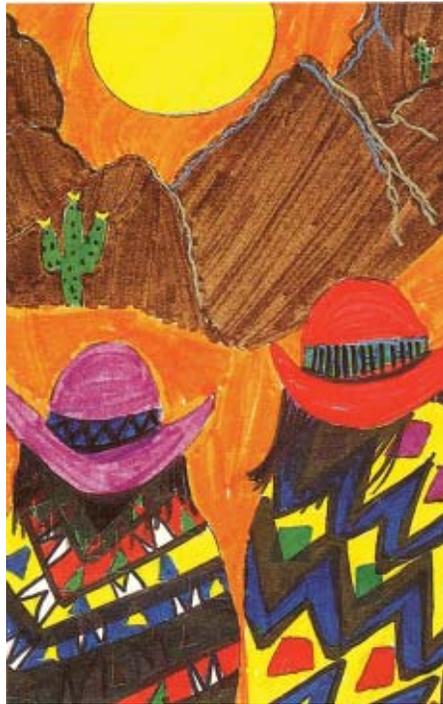
There may be some truth to this scenario, but it is a scenario that applies as much to science, foreign languages, and math as it does to the arts. Why then, if the arts are not unique in the level of quality with which they are taught, are they so vulnerable to budget cuts and so low on our educational priorities?

One reason is that the arts are not regarded as useful—pleasurable yes, useful no. Now utility is a notion that needs analysis. Some things are useful because they help you do things that are valuable—like getting into college or a fine university. For college admission, arts courses have no such utilities. In fact, courses in the arts are liabilities for admission to some selective universities. For some admission committees high transcripts that list courses in the arts reveal that the aspiring candidate avoided “solid” courses and instead opted for what I suppose could be called “gasses”. Other universities, including my own, eliminate arts course grades

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when the committee calculates grade point average. A high school student who aspires to be a practicing artist and who receives A grades in all of his or her arts courses receives no credit for those courses when competing for admission, but woe be the same student who gets a C in physics. And irony of ironies, the same university that ignores grades in the arts at the high school level confers degrees in the arts for students on its own campus.

The reason for the marginalization of the arts is, I think, related to a deeply, but tacitly held conception of mind. It is a concep-



OLIVIA NAM, *SOMBREROS*, 1995

tion of mind that is rooted in Plato’s view of human enlightenment and in the legacy of the Enlightenment on our conception of rationality. For both Plato and Descartes it was mathematics that was closest to God; to really know, one had to free one’s self from the senses and, instead, address what is abstract, general, and timeless. The arts by contrast, are concrete, particular, and timely. And to make matters worse, they are emotional! Genuine understanding depends upon detached objectivity and it is such un-

derstanding for which the schools are responsible. In short, their contribution to enlightenment is marginal at best, at worst they are misleading. And, in any case, they have little to do with rationality.

To make the arguments I have made is not to suggest that educational policy is made by people who consult Plato or Descartes before deciding what knowledge is of most worth. No, the problem is much deeper. These prejudices regarding the nature of mind are so ingrained in our culture that they are not recognized for what they are, and should there be any doubt, the university legitimizes them, thus playing a major conservative role in constraining the possibilities of schooling.

Imagine, if you will, the consequences on the secondary and even the elementary school curriculum if by some magic admission to selective and not so selective universities required a portfolio of paintings, a video tape of a dance improvisation, a collection of poetry, a film of an acting performance, or a tape of a recital. I dare say that if admission to college required such submissions there would be a riptide through the grades that would flood even the kindergarten. What if, to continue this mind experiment, the S.A.T.s were also excized of their multiple choice items in language and math and instead assessed actual performance in the arts. Where then would the arts be among our educational priorities?

The deep point that I am making is that the place of the arts in the 108,000 schools in America is not likely to significantly change without a re-conception of what schools are for, what it is that nurtures mind in all of its splendid manifestations, and what universities themselves must change to open, rather than to constrain, the education of our children. This is a tall order, but it is necessary. Without a re-vision of the possibilities of mind and the potential of schooling we are likely to continue to fiddle with the chrome of education while employing a motor that does not have the capacity to get us where we want to go. The time has come to look under the hood.

From the New Haven Experience:

Exploring Art, Artifacts, and Culture in the Institute

By Jules David Prown

The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute was established in 1978 as a joint program of Yale University and the New Haven Public Schools. A fundamental principle of the Institute is that the curriculum is initially generated by the school teachers themselves. Yale faculty are then invited to offer seminars in areas of teacher interest. Individual teachers propose topics they will develop in seminar as curriculum units and teach the following year. In response, Yale faculty seminar leaders fine-tune the planned reading and discussions to fit the interests of the accepted participants. Completed units are subsequently published and made available to other interested teachers in the school system (and teachers elsewhere by request).

The seminar leaders from the Yale faculty bring greater subject matter knowledge and expertise; the school teachers bring much greater practical classroom knowledge. The seminars are collegial undertakings conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect. In working in a collegial way with school teachers, we Yale professors—more than seventy-five of whom, mostly senior faculty, have been involved with the Institute in its fifteen years of existence—learn much about the craft we profess, about what it means to be a teacher. It is easy to teach Yale students—give them the right materials and ask the right questions and they teach themselves. In the Institute we become aware of the extraordinary accomplishments of dedicated New Haven school teachers who work in environments that are often not conducive to learning, and we learn from their sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of individual students. Like all teachers, we learn through teaching.

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I have offered three seminars in the Institute, all of which have had a similar theoretical and methodological underpinning.¹ The method, in brief, derives from the concept that all artifacts—that is, all human-made objects, including works of art—are fragments of history that embody the beliefs of the culture that produced them. They are things that happened in the past but, unlike other historical happenings, continue to exist in the present. They can therefore be re-experienced, affording a special mode of non-verbal, affective access to other cultures and to our own. Pedagogically, this provides an opportunity for making other times and other places, other ways of life and thought, more comprehensible to students, including those who have difficulty absorbing verbal information, or who are immediately dismissive of cultures different from their own. It also enables young

All artifacts can be re-experienced, affording a special mode of access to other cultures and to our own.

people, including those who lack verbal or mathematical skills, to extract information from things about their own culture, whether their family, their community, or their social, religious, or ethnic heritage. Four out of five school children in New Haven are from minority groups, and units on African, Hispanic, Pre-Columbian and Native American cultures are usual, along with more traditional units on historic Anglo-American culture.

In my seminars, we use close analysis of objects as a means of understanding culture, not only to absorb factual historical evidence but to dig beneath the surface to find unconscious expressions of cultural belief. It involves application of a simple methodology. Teachers from New Haven elementary,

¹Described in my article “Mind in Matter: an Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 1982), 1-19, (reprinted in Robert Blair St. George ed., *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, [Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988], pp. 13-37).

middle, and high schools who teach Social Studies, History, Art, English, Spanish, and French (language teachers of a cultural/historical bent experimenting with materials for instruction) have enrolled in my seminars. The first two were entitled “Art, Artifacts, and Material Culture” and “Time Machines: Artifacts and Culture.” The seminar I gave most recently on “The Family in Art and Material Culture” was structured around the analysis of images of the family and, to a lesser extent, objects of everyday life. Emphasis was placed on key stages of family life—birth, childhood, marriage, parenthood, aging, and death.

With the emphasis on methodology, the seminars seem to have been particularly useful to teachers in developing *practical* aspects of their teaching lesson plans. Each

class meeting focuses on the analysis of a single object. In seminar meetings we analyze museum objects, but the teachers are encouraged in developing units to subject everyday materials to the same kind of close analysis. Their students in turn can do the same thing

with pictures in magazines, family snapshots, or items of everyday life around them. The museum is used not as a treasure house that contains sanctioned objects of beauty and value, but as a training ground for learning to extract understanding from things. This affective way of learning works for non-literate as well as literate students, and offers opportunities for students who may seem backward to excel through visual acuity or creativity in executing projects in the curriculum unit.

Units developed in the material culture seminars promise an extraordinary range and variety of classroom experiences. They have included “The Native American: Through the Eyes of His Mask with a Special Focus on the Indians of Connecticut”; “Comic Books: Superheroes/heroines, Domestic Scenes, and Animal Images”; “New Haven:

Its Ships and Its Trades, 1800-1920"; "Totem Poles of the North American Northwest Coast Indians"; "Mexican Culture Taught Through the Aztec Calendar"; "Body Exterior—The Language of Contemporary Fashion"; "Toys Are Us"; "Cajun Music: The Voice of the Cajun Family"; "Family Life among the Ashanti of West Africa"; "The Heritage and Culture of Puerto Ricans"; "The Inuit Family: A Study of its History, Beliefs, and Images"; and "New Haven Families: Artifacts and Attitudes, 1770s to 1890s." Through the use of

objects and a systematic method of object analysis, such units can stimulate and direct students' ability to use their senses, especially their abilities to see; to overcome inhibitions and respond emotionally; to reflect on the meaning of their sensory and emotional experiences; to express themselves orally and in writing with clarity and precision; to make value judgments and decisions. The curriculum units are intended to convert the theory of the seminar into the practice of the New Haven classroom.



JOSEPH WRIGHT OF DERBY, A PHILOSOPHER GIVING THE LECTURE ON THE ORRERY, 1766

Learning from Things

Our schools train students to retrieve and transmit information in abstract form, words and numbers. Little instruction is offered in the interpretation of objects, which also embody information and are sources of knowledge. In "The Orrery," painted in 1766 by the English artist Joseph Wright of Derby (1734-97), an elderly man instructs a group gathered about a mechanical apparatus that reproduces the orbital movement of the planets. Two of the adults concentrate on his words, one taking notes; two others seem lost in their own thoughts as they stare into the device; three children

gaze with fascination at the orbiting planets and the hidden source of light that represents the sun. The eyes of the onlookers echo the glowing orbs of the planets. Illumination is what this picture is about; it is an eighteenth century image of enlightenment as well as of The Enlightenment. Understanding is transmitted through words—spoken, written down, preserved in books as seen to the right; absorbed emotionally through feelings, reverie, reflection; and learned from the direct examination of a material object. The orrery presents the facts of the solar system, but also opens the mind to larger speculations about the mystery of the universe and its creation.

Linkages

By Kent C. Bloomer

The accumulated knowledge of the arts and sciences is a cultural legacy that ought to be the public property of a modern society. Yet recent educational practices have promoted a condition of hyper-specialization and a professional sequestration of cultural wisdom. In the somewhat strident words of Christopher Lasch, an emergent "Aristocracy of talent . . . lacks any acknowledgement of reciprocal obligations between the favored few and the multitude. Although they are full of 'compassion' for the poor, they cannot be said to subscribe to a theory of noblesse oblige, which would imply a willingness to make a direct and personal contribution to the public."¹

Architecture is a case in point. Although many architects do have compassion for lives of city dwellers, the study of architecture is virtually non-existent in primary schools and treated only occasionally in secondary schools. Coursework in architecture is very limited as an introductory subject in colleges, only to flourish as a highly professionalized five-year bachelor's or three-year master's program in approximately a hundred schools throughout the United States. Ironically, this elite educational system may be over-producing the number of professionals while avoiding an immense constituency of persons who are affected every day by a world of rooms, buildings, streets, monuments, and urban places, the conditions of which go begging for some form of lively public discussion. In fact, the nature of architecture, like music, can be taught as an open subject of inquiry rather than as a closed professional discipline at any level of education from kindergarten onward.

I led three seminars about architecture, mostly to primary and middle-school teachers, within the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. All of the teachers taught customary subjects such as English, mathematics, *(continued on next page)*

¹Lasch, Christopher, *The Revolt of the Elites*, New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995, pp. 44-45.

From New Haven:

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Bloomer: Linkages

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and social studies, while a few also taught drama and painting. None had ever investigated architecture in a classroom setting, but they soon understood that their own “subjects” provided some fundamental means of observing and analyzing aspects of public buildings and places. And our subordinate topic, architectural ornament and public monumentality, engaged everyone’s interests and expertise.

Several of the teachers, who were engaged in multi-cultural studies, studied the typical plans of a mosque and the rhythmic patterns in African flat-pattern ornament. The plans of the mosques demonstrated the architectural power of decorated walls positioned to face towards Mecca and thus to define the domain of a people. Examples of African flat-pattern ornament also drew attention to walls as architectural tablets for cultural expression. In many African traditions the importance of a decorated doorway to proclaim the rites of entry, possession, and exit illustrated the architectural power of a threshold. A drama instructor dramatized that liminal condition in local American architecture by asking his students to write and perform a play that included constructing a familiar front door on the stage as a principal character in a dialogue.

A mathematics and social studies teacher focused on the capitals upon the Greek columns gracing the entrance of her aging New Haven school building as ancient figures descended from the myths that flourished at the dawn of western society. Another mathematics teacher employed local church steeples as vehicles for understanding proportion and the relation of buildings to the human body. Her students would measure their own bodies and then, by counting the number of bricks or clapboards commensurate with their body height, they would deduce the size of a church steeple either by direct observation or by overlaying “body units” upon a photo-

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tograph. Besides providing the students with tools of measurement and subdivision those exercises alerted the class to the architectural profiles and civic dimensions of their hometown.

Another teacher, combining instruction in artwork and ethnic history, persuaded his students to construct an immense model of the ancient Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán. He rolled out a piece of paper approximately five by twelve feet on the classroom floor and asked everyone to construct individual models of pyramids, houses, palaces, or riv-



F. BEDFORD, MORESQUE NO. 5, 1856

ers to be pasted onto the paper rug. It did not matter that the students produced huts that were occasionally bigger than pyramids and rivers that might turn out to be smaller than the sidewalks—or that most of their families were from Puerto Rico rather than Mexico. What mattered was their collective production, from a hodgepodge of diagrams and photographs, of a dazzling model of a lost city that could be rolled up like a rug and taken from one schoolroom to another as a proud display of their architectural knowledge and achievement.

One of the seminarians, Bill Derry, was a

teacher, librarian, and media expert who was about to be appointed Director of Library Media for all of the New Haven public schools. Several months after the seminar he invited me to come look over a cramped little library room in a local elementary school. Derry, school administrators, potential donors, a library consultant, and I met in what appeared to be an ordinary classroom overstuffed with books, furniture, and cramped spaces for reading and instruction. At our next meeting I included some graduate students from the Yale School of Architecture. At this “extended” seminar, the school’s principal presented a wish list that included a bowl of fish as an important provision for the library. Objections to the fish as frivolous in light of the library’s desperate needs faded when the principal explained that the young students might benefit from seeing a colorful and watery sign of life placed within the interior wall so as to be visible from the long, dark, and windowless corridor. The idea of the fishbowl created the theme “fishing for knowledge.” Other walls were broken open as doorways to additional space in adjacent storage and counseling areas. Several Yale students volunteered to build and contribute new furniture embellished with wave patterns reminiscent of the sea. Money, computers, rugs, and light fixtures were donated by banks and local industries with mounting enthusiasm. The first phase of the library improvement and expansion was completed as scheduled.

We need more such “linkages.” Forms of knowledge now sequestered in graduate professional programs can quite easily be experienced and basically understood by others, including the very young, if there is a direct and creative connection between individual teachers from both graduate and elementary schools. While the professionally educated played an important role in our “extended” seminar, so did the “amateurs,” who came to realize that a small architectural project could be as celebrative as it was practical. Surely our public architecture would be more exciting and pervasive if it were linked to a constituency cultivated in the subject.

Learning through Drama

By Thomas R. Whitaker

A few years ago I proposed to a seminar on “Contemporary American Drama” in the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute that we proceed as a theater workshop or amateur repertory group. Only if we “inhabit” the scripts in that way, I said, could we discover their full theatrical meanings. To our group of common readings we would add theater games, improvisations, and several stages of rehearsal. The teachers agreed, hoping with me that our adult work, with exercises developed by Viola Spolin and Joseph Chaikin, and with plays by David Mamet, Sam Shepard, Ntozake Shange, Wallace Shawn, Christopher Durang, and Jules Feiffer, could prove applicable to their classes ranging from kindergarten to 9th grade.

So we played “Passing and Receiving,” “Molding the Object,” “Part of a Whole,” “Mirror Exercise,” and Open Theatre games in which behaviors are passed from one to another, transformed, and then passed on. We tried “open” scripts to which the actors must bring their own definitions of character, situation, and subtext. And we did lots of scene analysis. As we went along, we explored with the help of James Luse from Long Wharf Theatre some scenes from Shange’s *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*. One of our final projects was part of Feiffer’s *Grown Ups*, which I directed with two different casts. I was particularly struck by the ways in which an Asian-American and an African-American teacher allowed themselves to enter into attitudes and body-language appropriate to Feiffer’s Jewish family. “Non-traditional casting” seemed a way to discover community amid diversity. The teachers’ curriculum units ranged from “Recipes for Playmaking,” “Im-

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provisational Drama,” and “‘Come Alive’ Social Studies” to “The Amistad Affair: Problem Solving through Theater” and “Acting Up in Contemporary Law.” One of them, Bill Derry’s “Melting Pot Theater: Teaching for Cultural Understanding,” offered a plan for several classrooms to create a play about alien explorers who encounter the cultures of Puerto Rico, Russia, and Ghana.

As seminar leader I learned a good deal from that experience. In 1993, therefore, I proposed that another group focus directly on “Twentieth-Century Multicultural Theater.” Now I had an additional objective that I chose not to make explicit: Could these teachers from different racial backgrounds (six African-American, four European-Ameri-



FROM THE SEMINAR ON “TWENTIETH-CENTURY MULTICULTURAL THEATER,” 1993 (LEFT TO RIGHT): CAROLYN WILLIAMS, JEFFREY FARRELL, TRISHA TURNER, GERALDINE MARTIN, NICOLETTE PERRAULT, JOYCE BRYANT, AND GERENE FREEMAN.)

can, one Latino), some of whom seemed committed to their own traditions, become a coherent theatrical group? Could their role-playing of cultural diversity lead to a realization of their own deeper unity? And could our theater exercises and games help us to move toward the necessary trust, reciprocity, and openness to change?

It was worth a try. Along with our theater games and improvisations with “open” scripts, we started walking through scenes from David Henry Hwang’s *As the Crow Flies* and other scripts from Misha Berson’s anthology, *Between Worlds: Contemporary Asian-American Plays*. We then turned to problems of character and action in August

Wilson’s *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, and to the thematic and stylistic variety in George C. Wolfe’s *The Colored Museum*. Then, supplementing our scene-work with written comments on characters and pages from a director’s notebook, we entered international waters: Eduardo Machado’s *The Floating Island Plays*, Derek Walcott’s *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, Wole Soyinka’s *The Road*, and Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema, and Barney Simon’s *Woza Albert!* The high point of this stretch came with *Woza Albert!*—a satirical/apocalyptic play, composed through improvisation, about Johannesburg life under Apartheid. I led two people in a reading and a walk-through of Scene 1, and then asked them to improvise the scene. Then

I divided the group into pairs, asking each to select a scene, find an analogous action or situation in their New Haven experience, and develop an improvisation based on that local material. We performed the “improvs” in sequence, with often hilarious and sometimes poignant results. Our *Woza Martin!* included an interracial team engaged in a drive-by shooting and a collective visit to Grove Cemetery to invoke the resurrection of African-American heroes.

As the teachers completed their curriculum units on such topics as “Multicultural Theater in Mu-

sic,” “Drama and African-American Folktales,” and “The Role of the African Playwright as a Griot,” we rehearsed four longer projects. Two teachers directed scenes from Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun* and Wolfe’s *The Colored Museum*, while I directed scenes from Machado’s *Broken Eggs* and Walcott’s *Dream on Monkey Mountain*. The cast for *A Raisin in the Sun* was African-American; that for *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, by a reverse twist, was European-American (a theatrically trained teacher and I); and the casts for *The Colored Museum* and *Broken Eggs* were racially mixed. In our final (and celebratory) performance it was the long
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concluding scene from *Broken Eggs* that most fully realized my tacit objective for the seminar. Machado's rather Chekhovian play about an alienated, nostalgic, and dysfunctional family of Cuban exiles in California is much concerned with the failure of community, the need to meet each other across the social and psychological distances we have created. The play ends ambiguously, with recognitions of chronic escapism and addiction, a weary acceptance of the past, and a very tenuous hope for the future. But it requires of its actors a group-work that had enabled us to complete our own movement toward a multi-racial community. For us *Broken Eggs* had indeed made a theatrical omlette.

I am sometimes asked why university professors would want to lead a seminar for teachers. For me the answers have emerged from seminars over the years on such various topics as "The Process of Writing," "American Fiction," "The American Musical," and "Contemporary American Poetry: Expanding the Canon." We hope, no doubt, to be of service to the teachers and students in our inner-cities. We may see a chance to experiment with fresh subjects or pedagogical approaches. And we welcome the opportunity to discuss our subject and our craft with other adults. But very soon we also discover that these teachers need a kind of professional development that acknowledges their ability to plan their own courses of learning and teaching—and that challenges them to carry such plans to completion. In the end we find such a seminar to be exciting and invigorating for all of us. We learn from each other in often surprising ways—about our subjects, our approaches to teaching, and the opportunities for community in what is often an alienating environment. For me that seminar on multicultural theater, which required us all to risk ourselves in creating a community of role-players, brought to those answers a new clarity and a palpable force.

Poetry in the Classroom: The Beecher Experiment

By Paul H. Fry

One pleasant spring morning this year, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute Director James Vivian and I attended a gathering called "International Fiesta Day" at the Beecher School in New Haven. We had been invited because the four teachers presenting the event had attended my Summer 1994 Teachers Institute seminar called "Poems on Pictures, Places, and People." These teachers, Francine Coss (K), Geraldine Martin (1), Patrice Flynn (3), and Seminar Coordinator Jean Sutherland (5), had applied for the seminar as a "team" intending from the outset to work toward a Fiesta Day. They hoped to emphasize the diversity of human cultures for the benefit of their students, nearly all of whom are African-American. Coss wanted to prepare a unit on the American Colonial Period, Martin on ancient and modern Mexico, Flynn on Japanese culture, and Sutherland on African-American traditions. Their having joined forces, both in the seminar and in an interactive, cooperative approach to teaching in their school, was envisioned by the Institute as a prototype for future group projects.

I think the experiment was a wonderful success at every stage. My first response, though, when I saw the applications, was skeptical. I wondered whether poetry would really prove necessary or even useful as the teachers' plans developed; and I wondered whether a "team" with its collective aims could contribute the focused individuality of perspective on weekly topics that is needed in a seminar of twelve persons. But I saw right away that my doubts were unjustified. Not only did poetry prove to be an unforced and natural point of focus for the curriculum units these four teachers prepared, but

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in fact they hewed more closely to the announced issues of the seminar (pictures, places, and people) than did most of their colleagues. So diverse were the units apart from these four that I decided to rename my volume of units (Volume II, 1994) "Poetry in the Classroom: Incentive and Dramatization." Nearly all the units produced by the teachers in this seminar were excellent, but I recommend reading those of the Beecher team in particular as models of the way in which the ephrastic, regional, and social specificity of poetry can bring multicultural teaching to life in the classroom.

Francine Coss used early American hornbook verse, especially illustrated Alphabet Rhymes, to teach her kindergartners both the alphabet and the rather stern yet kindly-disposed virtues inculcated by such rhymes. Geraldine Martin devised a "counting train" (*uno* through *diez*) to teach the geography, daily lives, and social practices of the ancient and modern Mexicans (Mexico is one—*uno*—country, for example, but it has harbored three—*tres*—ancient civilizations, etc.): and each number-coded lesson was illustrated and augmented with poems written by Mexican adults and children. Patrice Flynn's challenge was to emphasize the unfamiliar in Japanese culture, and for this purpose, in addition to *haiku* and other forms, she chose poetry written and compiled into books by Japanese school children. Jean Sutherland, finally, worked with traditional folk verse (jump rope rhymes, field songs, wedding poems) to illustrate the language and values of her students' native cultural tradition. I hope this brief summary will give some sense of the ingenious and exhaustive research efforts undertaken by all four teachers. Apart from some of Jean Sutherland's materials, I the poetry professor had never encountered or even known of the poetry (published in pleasing English translations yet languishing unread and out of print) that the Beecher team's curriculum units make available.

And then came Fiesta Day. Francine Coss's children, in early American headgear and enunciating at the top of their lungs,

recited a book of alphabet rhymes, each responsible for a letter and holding up the pertinent picture. Focusing on poetry throughout, Geraldine Martin's Counting Train in serapes and white blouses recited and sang poems chorally, with interspersed solos. Patrice Flynn's class did relatively little with the poetry they had been studying but chose instead to stage a short *Noh* play about the wedding of a princess and a commoner forbidden by the cruel king on earth but celebrated among the stars. And Jean Sutherland's fifth graders, boys and girls in some cases nearly six feet tall, recited poems they themselves had written in praise of parents, caregivers, and friends singled out from the audience. Many were in tears, and one poet was so overwhelmed that she just stood with her aunt, unable to speak a word. The event lasted nearly the entire morning (we adjourned for the food of our cultures), but all the teachers, administrators, children, and parents were spellbound to the end, hardly aware that time was passing.

By Jean E. Sutherland

“I cried, but inside I felt proud. I thought everybody was crying sadness, but they were crying happiness. To me the assembly was very important not because I was in it but because all four classes worked hard and did well.”

These words, written by one of my fifth grade pupils, typify the reactions of children, parents, staff, and other guests lucky enough to experience our festival of culture through poetry. This was a combined production, the culminating event of curriculum units written and taught by four L.W. Beecher classroom teachers representing kindergarten, first, third, and fifth grade. As members of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, we had been enrolled in Professor Paul Fry's seminar, “Poems on Pictures, Places, and People.”

The idea of working as a team started about a year and a half before the final program. Since the Institute's steering committee had encouraged school colleagues to apply to

seminars as a team, the Beecher group met to discuss possibilities. Our idea of using poetry as the basis for studying Colonial American (kindergarten), Mexican (first grade), Japanese (third), and African American (fifth) culture was born. A key objective of our team was to encourage interaction among pupils and teachers across grade levels, with an eye toward involving other staff members. Parental involvement was an absolute must.

In our Yale seminar, a group of twelve teachers studied and discussed poetry which was primarily far beyond our pupils' grasp. At the same time, we developed our individual teaching units geared to our particular grade level, but motivated largely by our seminar experiences. Throughout, we met individually with Professor Fry, who provided comments and suggestions on the various stages of our unit writing. Independently, the Beecher group met regularly, checking their progress as a team.

During the school year that followed, our team's writing was put into action. First, we developed a schedule for teaching material and staging culminating events and also planned for cooperative activities across grade levels. Individually we began teaching our material to our pupils as we had prescribed in our own units. Some of our most successful lessons involved two classrooms working together. My fifth grade paired up with first graders. Together each couple wrote and illustrated a poem patterned after a short Mexican piece presented by the first grade teacher. Fifth graders taught first graders hand games based upon traditional African American rhymes which, after being presented at our festival, became a school-wide fad.

For that festival the parents planned, shopped for, prepared and served an overwhelming buffet of food representing each of the cultures the team had covered. Parents also sewed costumes, taught a Mexican dance, wrote and presented a poem, provided martial arts entertainment during the buffet, and some, including a hundred year old grandmother, were honored in person through their child's original poem.

My Father

My father was very handsome.
My father was thoughtful and
lots of fun.

My father was very nice,
He loved to play games and
shoot dice.

My father was a big kid.
Anything I asked him to do
he did.

My father was very light-skinned,
Not too fat, not too thin, just right.
I think he never liked to see me fight.

My father had nice curly hair.
When I needed him, he was always there.

My father tried to teach me lots of
stuff back then.
One thing was to swim.

When anybody messed with me,
it didn't bother me because,
back then I knew I had my father.

By now I think you know,
he's gone.
His memory will stay with me very long.

My father, Nathan Spearman,
passed away July 31, 1994.
I will remember him always.

Narkita Spearman

Narkita Spearman, who is now twelve years old, began to write poetry last year at L.W. Beecher Elementary School.



SPECIAL STUDIO STUDENTS FROM DIAMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA, COLLABORATIVE QUILT OF TRANSFORMATION, 1995

Student Artwork: Collaborative Quilt of Transformation

By Helen Seigel

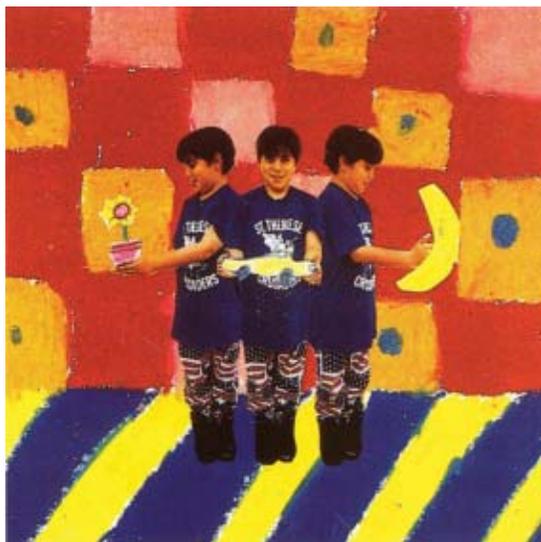
This quilt image was created by twenty students (grades 3-5) at Diamond Elementary School who are participants in the Special Studio art program with artist Helen Seigel. Together the student artists and the professional artist worked to construct an image that would be both visually stunning and conceptually challenging. Each student was photographed in three positions: receiving, observing, and giving an object. Next, students used oil pastels to design a wall and floor background, applying their knowledge of basic color theory and pattern. They voted to alternate warm and cool colors on the walls and to be free to choose their own colors for the floors. Conceptual planning discussions included issues such as how to work together successfully as a group. Inherent in this process was the establishing of guidelines or rules for everyone to follow. Equally important were opportunities for free expression by each individual member of the group. After gluing the photographs onto the completed backgrounds, students gathered to plan the objects which they would be passing on to one another. With the group seated in the configuration of the actual artwork, Ms. Seigel “handed” the world to Marta Navarro (top left), who picked it up, transformed it first into a baseball (considering its round form), and then into a balloon. Her neighbor (to the right), Isidro Montoya, took her balloon and changed it into a circular frisbee, and then into a dog (for its conceptual connection). This pattern continues throughout the piece, each student receiving something, reinterpreting and reinventing that object, making formal or conceptual associations as they worked. Students used colored pencils and markers to draw their objects. They had to carefully consider the scale and position of each item so that it would fit into their hands. Upon completion of these mixed media collages (oil pastels, colored

Helen Seigel is Artist-in-the-Schools in the Santa Ana Unified School District in Santa Ana, California.

pencils, markers, and photography) the technology of color copying was employed to unify diverse textures into a harmonious and magical blend.

The resulting “quilt” of giving and taking not only demonstrates the students’ mastery of art elements, design, and techniques, but also illustrates how visual art is a powerful vehicle for critical thinking, exploration, invention, and collaboration.

Young Special Studio artists (grades 3-5) at Harvey Elementary School brain-stormed together to make a list of things that they could not do without the help of others. Then they



OCTAVIO INIQUEZ, DETAIL FROM COLLABORATIVE QUILT OF TRANSFORMATION, 1995

each selected a theme which they would develop into a piece of art. Individual students could invite up to four other students to participate in their work. Acting as directors, students advised their peers as to how they might most successfully pose to communicate their idea. Photographs include the student artist and his/her “actors.” Students then combined the resulting photographs with colored pencils, markers, oil pastels, and magazine images to create evocative mixed media collages. Finally, the collages were turned into color prints which seem to make their fantasies appear to be real!

These pieces are truly mixed media works as they combine art materials, mass media imagery, drama, and student collaboration to yield striking, original statements.

Whitaker: the Arts

(continued from page 8)

may lead us to think about teaching. Mary Cassatt’s *The Banjo Lesson* suggests a desirable intimacy in the teaching relation. (Indeed, a study for that painting is entitled *Two Sisters*.) Saroeun Sim’s untitled work comes from a 3rd grade class at Jackson Elementary School in Santa Ana, California, where Halinka Luangpraseut is Artist-in-the-Schools. This image renders the linking power of music through a guitar that completes the evident circle of friendship and also the formal design. We have continued this theme, shifting both instrument and gender, with William Sidney Mount’s *The Novice*, on page 28, a painting that again understands music to bring teacher and learners into the same charmed group.

Olivia Nam’s *Sombreros*, on page 9, comes from a 5th grade class at John F. Kennedy Elementary School, also in Santa Ana. Its bold design, with a hidden life in the averted figures and a radiant source beyond the mountains, seems to underline Elliott W. Eisner’s comments on a marginalized vitality in our schools. Natalie Pedroza’s narrative collage, *Building a Tree House Where We Can Play*, on page 26, comes from a 4th grade class at Harvey Elementary School in Santa Ana, where Helen Seigel is also Artist-in-the-Schools. Its images and its medium harmonize with Colleen Fairbanks’ account of collabora-

tion as “a lived story.” On page 30 we have included an untitled piece by Huyva Tanikawa from a first grade class at Jackson Elementary School, which offers a delightful tension between the centered and the eccentric. And the back cover features Sergio Romano’s *Stop! Save the Whales*, which comes from a 3rd grade class at Harvey Elementary School. Its title explains the shouting boy and the sea-mammals below, but the total design is a joyous image of youthful quest in the context of both nature and society—and an instance of the role that art education can play in that quest.

(continued on page 30)

Partnering University Dance and the Schools: Toward the Vertical Integration of Education

By Jill Beck

In 1994, the Dance Division at Southern Methodist University moved to establish collaborative partnerships with schools in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. The impetus was a desire to help remedy the isolation of the university from the schools in its community, and to devise an innovative model that would achieve some of the national goals for Arts in Education. With the assistance of funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), a three-year program was initiated that linked the close study and practice of dances to inquiry in areas of social studies and humanities, including history, cultural studies, geography, and gender.

The project began with the selection of six population groups that are important to the metroplex population, three of which would be the focus of research and pedagogical design in Year 1: Mexican, Cajun-French, and Vietnamese. Experts in dances from each culture were invited to SMU for intensive workshops with undergraduate and graduate students. The undergraduates, working in teams with faculty or graduate students, researched contextual information about the dances. What societal classes danced? Why and where were the dances performed? What currents of international influence do the dances reflect? What beliefs or values do they reveal or express? In answering such questions, university students were engaged both in gathering information related to the dances they were practicing, and in analyzing the dances to find points of intersection between that information and its artistic/cultural expression.

Initial partnerships with the schools were formed to share the materials and approach of the international study units. Some of our initiatives welcomed children and teachers to SMU, and others launched SMU students and faculty into the schools. Children's Workshops were held at the uni-

versity, for groups of 50-200 children, with a focus on perceiving and discussing meaning in performed art. Deaf and hearing-impaired students represented about 25 percent of the participants in the Workshops, and they excelled in "reading" the visual language of dance, in interpreting meanings of complex sequences of physical expression. SMU professors worked with teachers to develop preview guides and questions that teachers could use to prepare students for the Workshops, and review assignments (such as writing the story of a dance) as follow-ups to the visits.

In another type of link, after-school programs were formulated with area teachers for grades 4-6 and taught by undergraduate and graduate student teams. These programs integrated dance study with practice in abilities measured on the yearly TAAS tests (Texas Assessment of Academic Skills) and endorsed in the National Standards for Arts in Education. For example, children read maps to locate places and patterns of human migration; they learned to apply such spatial concepts as counter-clockwise, asymmetrical, and the four cardinal directions. They memorized existing dances, created original dances embedded with their own intent and meaning, and documented dances in the symbolic language of dance notation. They performed for their families and teachers, becoming increasingly comfortable with speaking, explaining, dancing and problem solving in public.

Teachers noticed positive changes in some students' self esteem, and in their readiness to participate more actively in their other classes. Principals were pleased that the new dance program demonstrated awareness of important existing educational goals, and were impressed by the facility of dance in stimulating inquiry in a wide array of subjects. This feedback will be crucial to the SMU dance program's future in the schools; in the coming years dance is projected to become an element of regular social studies classes. Dance in the schools will of course be less likely to be cut when budgets become

tight, if it is integrated in mandated curriculum.

Graduate students and faculty at SMU also turned their attention to the development of computer software that would preserve on multimedia CD-ROM all the research they had done on the context of the different dances, yet in a format that would allow future students to continue to work creatively. We have settled on an interactive software design that has two main approaches to learning. The Main Road is a narrative spine that takes the learner through the history and cultural background of the dance under study, linking it to important information in the social sciences and humanities. Within the Main Road, key words are underlined. When clicked on with the computer mouse, these words open up various resources in text, graphics, dance notation, audio, maps, slides, and video. The data within the Main Road are beneficial to learners who prefer linear learning but may wish to diverge from a strict path of study to fulfill their curiosity in particular areas. The second environment accessed by the interface is the Resource Room. A collection of "bins" of audio, visual, and text materials, it is a vehicle for free exploration of any topic on which the study unit touches. A key concepts index facilitates the location of sources of information. A workbench area enables students to compile and organize their own portfolios of materials on a given theme. In consultation with teachers, one of the important tasks in Year 2 will be adapting the CD units for students of different ages.

The FIPSE project has proven the applicability of much university research to K-12 curricula. It also demonstrates the appropriateness of the university community turning its attention to greater community problem solving, the rewards for which have been a renewed excitement about learning and a pride in education as a vehicle for social progress. The SMU/Dallas/Fort Worth arts partnership is an important step in envisioning and implementing the vertical integration of education.

Jill Beck is Dean of the School of the Arts at the University of California, Irvine.

Saint Joseph Ballet's Program for Inner-City Children

By Marty Trujillo

One of the more demoralizing aspects of growing up in a poor community is the impoverished view of the world it presents. Miracles occasionally occur, however, when individuals are able to reach into those communities, inspire the children who live there, and offer them the time and encouragement to expand their knowledge and appreciation of the world and their place in it. The Saint Joseph Ballet has been inspiring the children of Orange County, California, for 12 years, and it has been able to be a source of inspiration because of its partnership with local school districts, businesses, and the communities themselves.

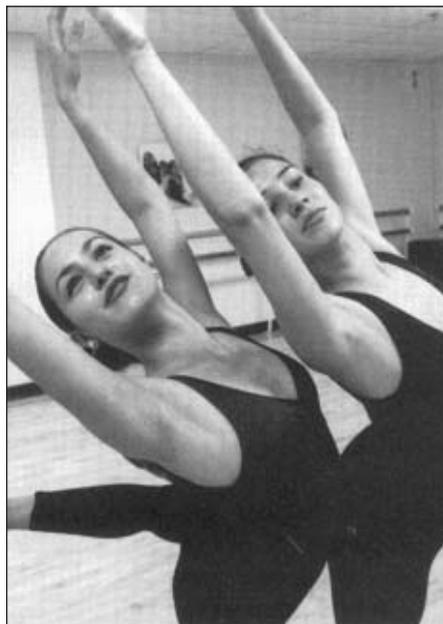
An example of this partnership is the Ballet's long-standing relationship with the University of California in Irvine. Dance Professor and internationally known choreographer Donald McKayle serves on the Ballet's Board of Directors and is currently producing a work involving both the Ballet's dancers and his own college students. UCI alumna Gina Lo Preste is an assistant instructor for the Ballet. In many cases, these teachers are the first college graduates the children have known outside the classroom.

The Ballet is the largest organization in Southern California offering quality arts programming to children from low-income families as an after-school and summer activity. The Ballet, which makes its home in a Latino enclave in downtown Santa Ana, emerged from a highly successful pilot program originally funded by the Ahmanson Foundation back in 1983. Its goals have been simple and direct from the start: to provide dance training to inner city youths free of charge as a means of preventing delinquency, building self-esteem, teaching new skills, and ultimately, changing their lives. The children participating in the Ballet perform to music that reflects a multitude of heritages, including, in many cases,

Marty Trujillo is a volunteer with the Saint Joseph Ballet in Santa Ana, California.

their own. The beauty and grace that result from discipline, teamwork, and hard work are displayed through the troupe's performances, which have become fixtures on the Orange County arts scene.

Under its Artistic Director, Beth Burns, the Ballet offers a variety of programs. Besides its year-round dancing program, it brings week-long dance workshops to elementary and intermediate schools in the poorest neighborhoods of Santa Ana. This partnership not only strengthens the troupe's



ODETTE MOLERO AND FLOR DE LIZ ALZATE REHEARSE A PAS DE DEUX FOR THEIR LAST SAINT JOSEPH BALLET PERFORMANCE BEFORE CONTINUING DANCE TRAINING AT NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS.

ties to the community by drawing more low-income children into its year-round program, it also helps to assure the arts will remain a component of the public school curriculum.

Early last year the Ballet's Board of Directors also established an Advanced Training Scholarship Fund. The scholarship program enables low income "graduates" of the Ballet to attend college and continue their dance training. They awarded the first two scholarships last year, and two students—the first in their families to receive a college education—are attending the North Carolina School of the Arts with the aid of this fund.

The Ballet derives its mission from its simple goals, but its impact transcends this. The DanceFree Weeks program is evaluated annually to ensure its effectiveness. Comments offered following the most recent outreach concluded that the "wonderful" program had "excellent" instructors who gave "children who have difficulty academically a chance to excel in something else." The comments also noted that the program increased the students' "awareness of movement and professional dance," as well as increasing self-esteem and helping to create a positive school atmosphere.

In its eleven years of service to the community, the Ballet's activities have reached more than 23,000 Orange County inner city youths. The statistics are telling: Ninety-six percent of the Ballet dancers are from low income families. A typical dancer comes from a family of five whose average monthly income is \$1,000. At least 92 percent of the participants represent the Latino, African American, and Asian communities of Santa Ana and neighboring cities. Since 1985, the DanceFree Week workshops have been presented to more than 19,000 students, with seventeen hundred participating in October of 1994 alone.

The true success of the program lies in the kids themselves. One child, 14-year-old Liz Lira, who has been with the Ballet for three and a half years, credits her dancing with helping her remain focused upon her studies. "When dancing," she says, "I'm focused more on what I'm doing, so in school, I'm more focused on what I'm doing. When performing, you may be nervous at first because you may think you might mess up or fall, but once you have performed and you see that people like who you are and not what you did or do, you feel very confident in what you do because no matter what, your friends in the company are there for you." The hours of preparation, the desire to achieve, the willingness to participate—these all conspire to assist children become more assured, more creative, more human.

Greene: Metaphors and Possibility

(continued from page 5)

We do realize that a metaphor enables us to understand one thing better by likening it to what is not, as in the case of the blue guitar. Poetry still is the source of the best examples. Here is Muriel Rukeyser writing about breaking through boundaries, doing unexpected things with space:

After the lifting of the mist
after the lift of the heavy rains
the sky stands clear
and the cries of the city risen in day
I remember the buildings are space
walled, to let space be used for living
I mind this room is space
this drinking glass is space
whose boundary of glass
lets me give you drink and space to drink
your hand, my hand being space
containing skies and constellations
your face
carries the reaches of air
I know I am space
my words are air.

As in so many other instances of metaphor, we are enabled to move from one state of things to another, to reach through the walls, the glass towards the possibility of “skies and constellations”—and do so by an imaginative act.

An obvious response, certainly from those who want things “as they are,” is to ask what the “blue guitar” or a “hand being space” literally mean. But there are many who make the point that a metaphor does not say what it means; since the meaning of it is the transformation it brings about in the listener or the reader. “Metaphor,” writes G.B. Madison in *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity*, “performs an existential function in that it provokes a change in the way we view things, it brings about a transformation in our thinking.” The intelligibility of the blue guitar or the hand being space lies in its power to effect a change in attitude, direction, and at length understanding.

If meaning, then, is an event or a happening, it may be a generator of choosing on

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the part of the participant—the reader or the listener. This does not mean, however, that metaphor is not linked with language or that the unexpected perspectives it may open are not due to unexpected usages of words. The center of language may well be the metaphor; and it is language that has the capability of provoking changes in our ways of thinking, knowing, seeing. One of the things that makes metaphor so important to the discourse about education is that it can make visible and palpable particular phenomena, those so often submerged in categories. It may well be that attention paid to literature and the several arts, not simply as component parts of new curricula, but as occasions for experience on the part of those engaged in observing and reform, can release ways of seeing that go beyond the language of report.

An attending to metaphor can effect new connections in experience, disclosing new configurations to the mind. We find out, as Mary Warnock has written in *Imagination*, “that there is always *more* to experience and *more in* what we experience than we can predict. Without some such sense, even at the quite human level of there being something which deeply absorbs our interest, human life becomes perhaps not actually futile or pointless, but experienced as if it were.” To enter into considerations of a teaching activity, a classroom project, a writing program with such a feeling of interest and absorption is quite different from entering in from a vantage point of expertise or a politely distanced “friendly criticism.” Energized, in a matter of speaking, by metaphor, we may be able to think in terms of untapped possibility.

Metaphor also has to do with empathy, the capacity to look through another’s eyes. Metaphor, writes Cynthia Ozick in *Metaphor and Memory*, is “a shocking extension of the unknown into our most intimate, most feeling, most private selves....” She goes on to talk about the important “power of connection,” and of the continuities metaphor can create. It takes a metaphor, she tells us, to transform memory into a principle of continuity in experience. “Through metaphor,” says Ozick, “the past has the capacity to imagine us, and we it. Through metaphori-

cal concentration, doctors can imagine what it is to be their patients. Those who have no pain can imagine those who suffer. Those at the center can imagine what it is to be outside. The strong can imagine the weak. Illuminated lives can imagine the dark. Poets in their twilight can imagine the borders of stellar fire. We strangers can imagine the familiar hearts of strangers.” This has relevance, clearly, for all sorts of relationships within institutions and in classrooms as well.

Empathy is not to be viewed as a mode of intuitive identification. More important is the beginning of authentic dialogue cued to a sense of the being of the “stranger.” Nothing is gained by fusing with another, wrote Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian thinker and linguist. It is better, he wrote, for the other to stay on the outside “because from there he can know and see what I cannot see or know from my vantage point, and he can thus enrich essentially the event of my life.” Our present interest in multiple perspectives may be seen as a way of enriching the events of diverse private lives. Classroom communities require an inclusion of plural vantage points: those of children, adults, newcomers, scholars, neighborhood representatives. There need be no identification; but the stranger’s vision, if opened by imagination, can expand and widen the worlds of those who have been present since their beginnings. Similarly, if dialogue and authentic conversation take place, the stranger or the newcomer can be gradually moved to attend to others’ stories, to apprehend through others’ eyes the world she/he is expected to join. In many ways, for university people as well as school people, it is a matter of entering into others’ narratives in order to grasp how they construct their realities. Only when this is understood, can the questioning be provoked on the part of learners, the questioning with which learning begins.

A rich example of the powers of metaphor can be found in Toni Morrison’s novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1972). Pecola Breedlove, an unloved Black child made to believe she is ugly, yearns to have blue eyes, pretty blue eyes. She thinks that “if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say beautiful, she

herself would be different.” Her mother and father would be different. “Maybe they’d say, ‘Why look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn’t do bad things in front of those pretty eyes.’” Unable to see her own beauty, she wants to look like Shirley Temple. Claudia, who tells most of the story, hates blue-eyed dolls when she is young and tries to dismember them. Ashamed at last, her hatred turns into “fraudulent love.” And then, “It was a small step to Shirley Temple. I learned much later to worship her, just as I learned to delight in cleanliness, knowing, even as I learned, that the change was adjustment without improvement.” It would appear that there are few more potent ways of relating to the hopes and sufferings and misconceptions of young people like Pecola—strangers to many university people, strangers to their own teachers, who may need to be urged at last to imagine.

To respond to a rendering like this is quite different than responding to any social scientific exposure of racism or unfairness. It is different, too, from looking at photographs of lost children on city streets, stunned adults unable to intercede. We achieve something resembling empathy, something that may open the way to a dialogical relationship. We are continually reminded of the way in which the modern consciousness exists in a polyglot world. The only way to pay heed, it may follow, is by attending to the multiple voices sounding in ourselves as we try to look through unfamiliar perspectives at a world shared with so many we do not know. If we can perceive all this by means of metaphor, if we can grasp the edges of deficiency and desire, we may be moved in new ways to repair.

Arguing for the need to turn towards the “possible” by, at moments, altering our language, arguing also for more attention to the arts, we might summon up some other signs in the wind. There is, for example, Mike Rose’s *Possible Lives*, subtitled “The Promise of Public Education in America.” Needing to go beyond the overly familiar, he says, we need an altered critique, “one that does

not minimize the inadequacies of curriculum and instruction, the rigidity of school structure, the ‘savage inequalities’ of funding but that simultaneously opens discursive space for inspired teaching, for courage, for achievement against odds, for successful struggle, for the insight and connection that occur continually in public school classrooms around the country.” His book is an account of conversations in intimate visits to schools across the country. Escaping some of the bounds of literal, discursive speech, he is able to link a recognition of what is missing to the space of what might be. “Imagine you’re the CEO...,” he writes. “Imagine you’re the owner of a house in East L.A. and you’re losing it to a redevelopment project.” And then, speaking of a discouraged teacher imagining what might be as she watches the children walking in the door:

“The function of art has always been to break through the crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness.”

—John Dewey

“They’re the difference. They’re eager. They’re capable. Sure there’s a challenge to reach a drug baby, the special ed child who’s mainstreamed, the second language speaker...so you work at it.” A pause, and the teacher says, “And it takes *desire*.” That is one of the points of metaphorical language: it is propelled by desire; it evokes desire.

Mike Rose realizes that public education is forever unfinished, like the democratic community itself. He sees schools where what John Dewey called a “we” and an “our” are emerging, where the consequences of combined action are perceived and become an object of desire and effort. Dewey knew that consciousness of this sort has always been enhanced by encounters with the arts. “The function of art,” he said, “has always been to break through the crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness. Common things, a flower, a gleam of moonlight, the song of a bird, not things rare and re-

mote, are means with which the deeper levels of life are touched so that they spring up as desire and thought. The process is art.” The making of community, for him, like the opening out of public education, depended for him on the arousing of desire, on a consciousness of possibility.

Deborah Meier, in *The Power of Their Ideas*, speaks of the importance of imagination in the lives of children, leading (among other things) to the kind of imaginative play that leads to friendships and “the ability to imagine the world without oneself at its center.” She rightly says: “As we eliminate from our schools and from children’s after-school lives the time and space for exercising their creative imagination and building personal ties, we’ve cheated our children and our society in a far more critical way than we’re inclined to understand.”

I argue as well for an exercise of creative imagination on the part of teachers. If their language is informed with metaphor, they are more likely to break what Paulo Freire calls the “culture of silence,” in this case, the culture that marks so many bureaucracies. Freire

describes the development by Brazilian peasants of a “critical discourse” that may become a way of remaking their world. They began perceiving that the better world to which they aspired was being anticipated in their imagination. It was not a matter of idealism, Freire insisted. Imagination and conjecture about a different world than the unjust one that exists for so many are as necessary to the transformation of reality as a design is for a craftsperson or an artisan. And they may become, he went on to say, “a route to the invention of citizenship.”

For Dewey, distinctive human projects could best be achieved by means of a “subtle, delicate, vivid and responsive art of communication”; and surely he meant the kind of communication that is fundamentally metaphorical, that opens to possibilities. If university-school collaboration is to be significant, this should be fundamental to what it achieves.

The National Writing Project: A University-based Teacher-centered Partnership Program

By James Gray and Richard Sterling

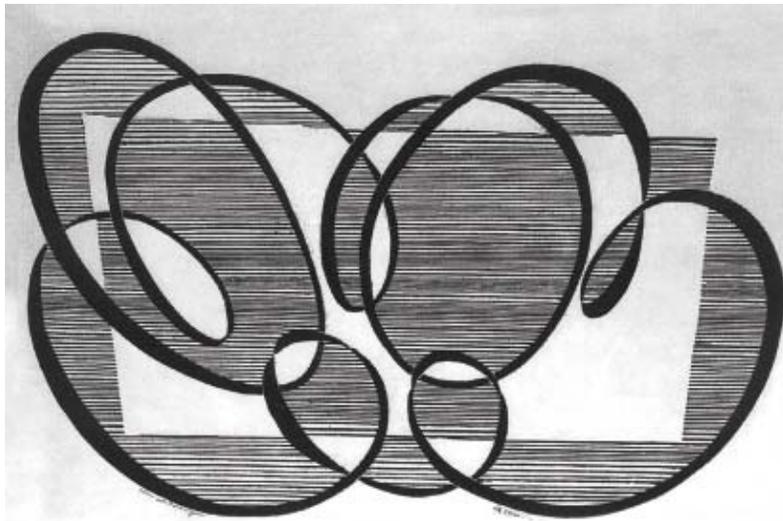
When the Bay Area Writing Project opened its doors to teachers in the summer of 1974, it offered teachers a program unlike any other they had experienced. The BAWP vision, conceived by a small group of classroom teachers, faculty and administrators at UC Berkeley, moved to improve writing in the schools by creating a new model for continuing education, one that recognized the expertise, knowledge and leadership potential of classroom teachers. We were prodded to action by what we saw as the failure of the profession to understand that writing is fundamental to learning. We found this lack of interest, this almost total neglect, inexplicable.

New teachers were trained to teach reading but not writing. Not a single university in the country offered a course on the teaching of writing for students in teacher training. Little writing was going on in the schools and little was being written by students at home. Federal research money was available in the field of reading but not in writing, and the Modern Language Association, at its huge annual conferences, scheduled no sections on the teaching of writing. An academic whose field of interest was rhetoric was frequently regarded as a pariah by his colleagues. If in the schools there were teachers who cared about teaching writing and were successful, they had learned on their own in the cauldron of their classrooms.

More fundamentally, neither the universities nor the schools gave any serious attention to the continuing education of classroom teachers. Some schools offered teachers a staff development day at the beginning of each new school year. After the coffee

James Gray and Richard Sterling are the former and current Executive Directors of the National Writing Project.

and doughnuts, teachers would gather to hear the annual speech, then go to a favorite restaurant for a long and enjoyable lunch, and at some time in mid-afternoon reassemble back at the school for department meetings to decide who would get the set of *A Tale of Two Cities* the first six weeks. If there were occasional workshops offered during the school year, they usually focused on particular school problems (tardiness, behavior in the halls, detecting lice in the hair) and seldom, if ever, on the content of



JOSEF ALBERS, *ENCIRCLED*, 1933

methods of teaching. In their teacher education programs, universities gave all of their attention to programs that prepared students for teaching credentials. There were no regular programs—except continuing education and summer school courses—for practicing teachers. The rare special programs for teachers that universities might offer, such as the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) English Institutes of the late 60s, were all based on the traditional ‘top-down’ summer school model: the professors spoke and the teachers—no matter how successful or informed they might have been—listened. At the end of the four or six week summer programs, there was no attempt to keep the teachers involved, no plans for the teachers sharing what they had learned with other teachers, nothing!

And teachers sat at the bottom of the hierarchical totem pole of educational policy makers. Their voices were seldom asked for or heard. Decisions on curriculum, instruction and staffing were made by those who were not teaching in the classrooms—that is, school board members, school and district administrators, university administrators, staff members of county and state departments of education.

Those of us who planned the new Bay Area Writing Project were determined to make a change—to do it better.

Doing it better meant turning past models and worn-out traditions upside down. The changes that we made led to the birth and extraordinary success of the Bay Area Writing Project which in turn led to its replication across California and the entire country. Over its twenty-two year history the Writing Project has continued to evolve and refine itself as it continues to grow at the local site level, state-wide, and nationally, yet the initial changes the Writing Project made in the early 70s are the changes we be-

lieve must still be made in order to make school reform possible and effective.

The Writing Project is basically one of teachers teaching teachers. It is one in which teachers come together regularly, year after year, in a variety of summer and school-year programs led by classroom teachers who have been trained by the writing project to talk to each other about teaching, about approaches that have worked, about successful ways to solve the problems teachers face. It’s a model based on the assumption that the best classroom teachers—and we know they can be found in all regions of the country—make the best teachers of other teachers. Such teachers are believable to other teachers as no outside consultant can ever be. They know the classrooms and they know the students and they know the prob-

lems. These Writing Project teacher-teaching-teacher programs have captured the hearts of teachers all across the country. Over 146,000 teachers each year now attend National Writing Project programs, and close to 1,250,000 teachers have participated in Writing Project programs since the BAWP offered its first program in the summer of 1974.

Everything starts with the design and content of the Invitational Summer Institutes at the local NWP sites, the linchpin of all Writing Project programs. Each institute is planned and coordinated by a team, usually one university and one classroom teacher. But most of the teaching is done by the participating teachers, usually 25 per institute, who have been drawn from all levels of instruction, elementary school through university. Each participant is scheduled for one to two hours to demonstrate an approach to teaching writing—some actual practice that the participant has had success with in his or her classroom. Most participants have never been asked to do anything like this before. Keith Caldwell, a participant in the project's first summer program, asked the other teachers in his school year workshops that followed the Institute: "How many of you have ever been asked to demonstrate some teaching practice to other teachers?" In 1974, and for many years to come, not one hand was raised. In addition to the demonstration of successful practices, participants also write a great deal, choosing varied forms and subjects, and discussing their pieces in regularly scheduled editing/response groups. Lastly, teachers read, discuss and write about key research and important works in the literature of the field.

These teachers, all successful in their own classrooms, discover quickly that teaching teachers is not the same as teaching students. After the experience of a five-week Institute where they all have witnessed and participated in each other's trial run workshop, and have participated in one-on-one coaching sessions with other teachers and the staff, most of the teachers develop a good sense of what it takes to become equally successful as a teacher of other teachers.

The summer institute is the Writing Project's first step toward recognizing teachers' authority and expertise in the world of teaching. When the Writing Project asks teachers to demonstrate what they know about teaching writing, it is tapping knowledge from practice, the single most important resource to improve teaching and learning in the nation's schools and the one most ignored by the education profession. When we train a corps of Teacher Consultants we are acknowledging that successful classroom teachers are the profession's natural teacher educators.

This preparation of teacher leaders is reinforced in several ways:

- Teachers quickly gain additional experience as teachers of teachers when they conduct school year in-service programs, the basic follow-up to the summer institute. These workshops are scheduled as a series, and may involve as many as ten Teacher-Consultants and one Coordinator, an experienced Teacher-Consultant, who helps the staff plan and oversee these programs. As is the case with all Writing Project programs, attendance at these workshops is voluntary. The sessions are typically three hours long, and give the Teacher-Consultant and the audience of teachers sufficient time to discuss particular practices, time to do some writing based on these practice, and time to share their writings in small editing/response groups.
- As teachers conduct more of these workshops, their professional careers take on added dimensions. They become Teacher Consultant staff members of their local sites, part-time teacher educators as well as full-time classroom teachers, and as they are sought out as workshop presenters their voices are heard as leaders of the Writing Project. They make connections to other Teacher Consultants at their own site and beyond, establishing their own personal networks, and often becoming members of one or more of the well established national networks of the Writing Project, such as the Urban Sites Network and the Rural Sites Network. Be-

cause the Writing Project has developed this corps of well prepared teacher leaders all across the country, it is now commonplace for many to be asked to serve by other educational organizations, such as the National Council of Teachers of English, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and state and national assessment and reform programs.

- The summer institute turns teachers into writers, and for many teachers the Writing Project's close attention to their personal and professional writing becomes the most important experience of the institute. The opportunity to focus on their own writing for five uninterrupted weeks, the assistance of feedback from fellow writers in the sessions of the editing/response groups, the reading of their finished pieces to an appreciative institute audience, and the publication of their best pieces in the annual anthology are activities which take teachers to a new level of personal as well as professional confidence. They know now that they are not only successful teachers of writing but successful writers as well. It is not surprising then that editing/response groups frequently continue long after the summer experience and become important follow-up programs of the Writing Project.
- The Writing Project has been a strong player in the nationwide teacher research movement, and the Writing Project's encouragement of teacher research, more than any other project activity, has helped break down the walls that have traditionally separated teaching and research, teachers from researchers. Teachers engaged in their own research develop naturally a personal interest in the field of research. Teacher-researchers want to know what, if anything, has been written related to their areas of interest. They regularly meet together with other researchers to discuss their reflections and insights, to compare methodologies and to raise questions. They are no longer outsiders to the world of research. Now they are contributors to the field.

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Gray: Writing Project

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Given the traditional paradigm for education research that has prevailed for so long, and the usual ways that new knowledge is created, acknowledged and disseminated, it is perhaps not surprising that Writing Projects have been opposed by some. Indeed, the Writing Project's zeal in recognizing the expertise of our best classroom teachers and developing their place as leaders within the world of professional educators has been met with opposition by many in academe, particularly from researchers in the field of writing. Throughout the twenty-two years of the Writing Project, we have endured a steady stream of criticism from some academics while at the same time, ironically, other academics are seeking to bring in the Writing Project to their campuses. And what we have heard over the years is always a variation on the same note, that is, it is beyond belief that teachers could be recognized as knowing anything. A sampling of what has been said:

"The Bay Area Writing Project is nothing but sophisticated Show-and-Tell."

"The writing project is the blind leading the blind."

"Teachers not only don't know anything, but worse, they don't want to know anything."

"Teacher knowledge is just impressionistic."

"Those National Writing Project teachers don't know anything!"

"What those writing project teachers need is MY COURSE!"

It is not surprising that classroom teachers have been ignored if those who are recognized leaders make such comments. Because we continue to hear such comments in the mid-90s as we once heard them in the mid-70s, it is likely that teacher-based reform movements such as the Writing Project will probably need additional time for total acceptance.

The Writing Project has always believed that any effective effort to improve teaching and learning must put classroom teachers at the center. It is in the classroom that the ultimate test of reform will take place, and, if changes are to succeed, they must be embraced by our strongest and best teachers. Otherwise reform will go nowhere.

Teachers and Students Collaborating as "Makers"

By Laura J. Roop, in collaboration with Laura Schiller

Ten summers ago, I spent much of my vacation in a National Writing Project (NWP) summer institute, an intensive five-week learning experience bringing together teacher-leaders across disciplines and grade levels. Like my colleagues, I was reputed to be a strong teacher of writing. Unlike many, however, I saw myself as a serious writer of poems and essays from the outset. Over the weeks, I watched many of these elementary, middle school, and high school teachers revise their identities—as they drafted, conferenced, read, and revised essays, stories, and poems, they became writers, too. As I wrote, I had an unprecedented opportunity to reflect on the relationship between my writing life and my teaching life. What experiences had permitted me to become a writer? What experiences had discouraged so many of my colleagues from writing, and why were they willing to engage in it now? Would it be possible to create a successful classroom workshop based on my own most positive learning experiences, as well as the model embodied in the summer institute?

I returned to my high school classroom eager to refine my teaching practice. That fall, I was invited by my writing project director to conduct several workshops for secondary teachers on the teaching of poetry writing and reading. Because of my summer institute experience, I knew better than to lecture at my colleagues; together, we read and wrote and reflected on reading, writing, and teaching poetry. With that strategic nudge by the director, I permanently revised my notion of professional behavior—I was responsible for sharing my learning with my colleagues as well as with my students and the larger community.

Laura J. Roop is dissemination coordinator for the Michigan English Language Arts Framework (MELAF) Project. Laura Schiller, co-director of the Oakland (MI) Writing Project, teaches sixth grade at Birney Middle School in Southfield, Michigan.

Five years later, I was named the director of the Oakland (MI) Writing Project, home of the summer institute that spurred my own professional growth. In that capacity, I have been able to work alongside other teacher-learners (and their students) as they revise their texts, their practice, and often, their lives. One such colleague, Laura Schiller, is collaborating with me as we explore the effects of Writing Project-related experiences on teachers' lives. Since Laura participated in the 1992 summer institute, she has blossomed professionally. She and another Writing Project teacher-consultant, Kathleen Hayes-Parvin, brought colleagues together to form a whole language support group. These Southfield teachers planned and conducted workshops and courses for other district teachers and administrators. Because of their efforts, the district was selected to be a demonstration site for the Michigan English Language Arts Framework (MELAF) Project, a state standards effort. Laura Schiller has published articles in *Changing Minds*, *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*, and *Language Arts*, and is completing a book about her own experiences teaching in a multicultural classroom.

Schiller identifies an experience with poetry during the summer institute as pivotal to her development:

You were talking about the way poems are like photographs, pictures. I was looking for a photograph of personal significance. I chose not to write about my husband—there could have been ramifications—I could write about my grandmother. She was dead; what harm could there be? I didn't have any idea what I was opening up. It was a Pandora's box. I was closed out of her death—she died when I was nine. This was something in my life that had been left unresolved.

The "photograph" she chose to write about was an image in her memory. Schiller describes the writing and rewriting of the poem as a cathartic experience. She tells of locking herself in the family study, then writing

and crying all afternoon. She felt as though she were finally acknowledging her feelings. “To this day, I cannot read the poem without crying,” she says. “I was given permission to be affected when I am reading; I allowed myself to feel more deeply.” Schiller notes that this was the first time she ever wrote a poem or something personally significant. Her previous experiences with writing had been largely informational and detached from personal experience.

For Laura Schiller, the act of revision was the connection between writing poetry and writing other genres. Heidi Wilkins (then co-director, currently principal of Walled Lake Elementary School) and I conferenced a number of times with her, bringing up issues of audience, purpose, and craft. She also received extensive feedback from her summer institute response group. Her poem, “My Grandma’s Arms,” went through about eleven drafts, beginning as prose notes, then moving back and forth from poetry to prose to poetry.

That experience became emblematic for Schiller partly because it represented an episode of risk-taking and experimentation. She had written in a genre she had never before attempted, had written her way into something deeply personal, had willingly drafted and revised text (some twenty draft pages), and had allowed the writing of the poem to spill out of “school” into her life.

Schiller has continued to experiment with genre studies, and to school herself—and her sixth graders—in the art and craft of writing. This winter, after visiting her poetry classroom, I was amazed to receive their insightful written responses to a difficult, three-page poem on mortality and transcendence I had recently completed. Sara, a sixth grade student, wrote in a letter:

The third time I read (the poem) over, I grasped it even better, and then all of the sudden, the moral sort of hit me. My mind staggered a little, but I recovered quickly from the blow. I found a whole new set of emotions in the poem.... The poem was not about Uncle Rube, or Luke, or Aunt

Tillie. It was about human beings, and how it’s the faults that we have that make us so human. Nobody ever reached heaven without falling into a few potholes. If that was the point you were trying to get across, it worked. It hit me like a slap in the face.

Another of Schiller’s classroom genre experiments during the 94-95 school year was a memoir study. Students read and wrote memoirs, as did their teacher. Schiller critiqued her own efforts in a letter to her Southfield colleagues, after rereading a chapter of *Living Between the Lines*, a book by Lucy Calkins on the teaching of literacy:

I never succeeded at getting my students to “pearlize,” layer, or grow meaning from, their entries. Our writers’ notebooks consist mostly of separate incidents. I now see my memoir, as well as many of my students’, did not succeed at clearly connecting the strands of meaning in life. Before next year, I’ll reread some memoirs and look for ways authors juxtapose moments and handle jumps in time. [M]ost important, I’ll try to rewrite my own memoir. My guess is, my students’ writing next year will reflect my own growth. If I can do it, then I can coach it.

When teachers like Laura Schiller are invited to see themselves as writers, they are being encouraged to tell, to tend, and to make their own unique stories. During summer institutes I’ve led, participants have talked about the risky but rewarding decision many writers have claimed to make: the decision to lead an examined life, paying close attention to what is seen, felt, heard, remembered, and imagined. On occasion, I’ve shared a passage from an essay, “Poems Are Not Luxuries,” by poet Audre Lorde:

[Poetry] forms the quality of the light with which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we

help give name to the nameless so that it can be thought.

Sometimes we’ve talked about and experimented with what I call “transformations,” the unsettling but important moves writers make when they take slices of life, whether tedious, painful, confusing, or endearing, and imagine them “other,” with different consequences, chronologies, and dramatic shapes. By experimenting with possibility in the seemingly safe context of a poem, story, or essay we may learn to experiment with possibility in our lives. In writing project summer institutes, the composition and revision of texts become the central metaphor for making and revising our professional and personal lives. Writing projects effect change in participants because they build literate learning communities among teachers where life narratives are valued and sometimes transformed into art. Teachers placed in the role of active learners may imagine and empathize with their students. Placed in the role of writers, they begin to imagine themselves writers, and active readers. Placed in the role of inquiring professionals teaching and learning with other professionals, they begin to imagine rich professional lives filled with colleagues who see themselves as learners, responsible to one another. Thus, workshop activities become exercises in imagination, leading participants toward empathic understanding of others—students, teachers, administrators, parents, and of course, authors—and their worlds.

In *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education*, Carol Witherell identifies two central reasons for the rich use of narrative in teaching and counseling: “One has to do with the coherence and the ongoing autobiographical activity of the self, the other with the power of story and metaphor in human action and feeling.” NWP sites around the country understand and tap the power of the word—written, read, and spoken—to mend the sometimes profound split between learning and teaching, between poetry and pedagogy, between our personal and professional lives.

Collaboration as Story Building

By Colleen M. Fairbanks

Having participated in the development of collaborations between universities and schools in different sites and across different states, I have come to see collaboration as a kind of lived story, one that unfolds but is rarely predictable. By lived story, I mean something on the order of Jerome Bruner's definition: "human agents doing things on the basis of beliefs and desires, striving for goals, meeting obstacles which they best or which best them, all of this extended over time" (1992, p. 43). Partnerships between people who have complementary but not necessarily identical aims or beliefs must negotiate, compromise, find consensus if they are to make goals and meet them, if they are to overcome the obstacles that their different roles or the context puts in their path. When they succeed and their story evolves along constructive lines, each character in the story learns at least as much as they have bargained for and usually a great deal more.

To illustrate how such partnerships between teachers from different institutions grow and change, I want to sketch briefly the story of one school-based collaboration in which I took part and then to discuss why this partnership worked as it did, to the benefit, I think, of both participants.

For three years, I worked with the Saginaw (Michigan) public schools in a broad-based collaboration between the schools and the University of Michigan's Center for Educational Innovation through Collaboration (CEIC). The institutional collaboration was aimed at the exploration of literacy, teaching, and teaming, and involved a number of faculty and graduate students in partnerships with teachers. My role consisted in facilitating the CEIC's projects with the schools. In addition, I also established with my Saginaw colleagues individual classroom projects aimed at developing curriculum to encourage the literacy learning of students in the district.

When I started my work in Saginaw, about ninety miles from the University of Michigan campus, I could not have imagined the twists and turns that my life as full-time,

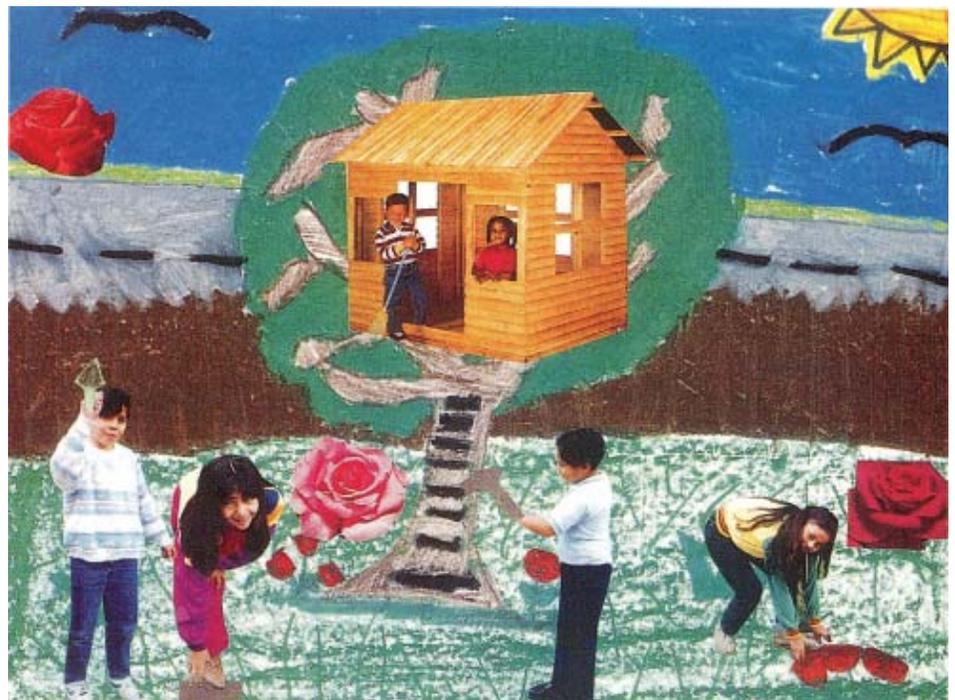
Colleen M. Fairbanks is Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Texas at Austin.

school-based project coordinator would take. Nor, I suspect, could Kathie Smith, a tenth grade English teacher at Saginaw High School, one of the city's two comprehensive high schools. My initial activities consisted of acquainting myself with the district's language arts teachers and the projects currently underway. In October, several of us attended a seminar in Detroit to talk with other teachers about our individual efforts at school reform and to learn about what others had begun in their own classrooms. One of the sessions included an example of a cross-age tutoring project in Chicago. As I recall it now, it seems that Kathie and I were struck by the same bolt of lightning; we began planning, even during the session, how we might do something similar with Kathie's tenth graders and one of the local elementary schools. This moment began for us a year-long co-teaching partnership that extended far beyond the cross-school project we had initially stumbled upon.

Our work together did not then just magically unfold. It began with a mutual interest sparked by the opportunity to learn from other teachers and to explore what we might learn in our own context. Kathie and I discovered at that meeting, and in our subse-

quent work, compatible beliefs about teaching and learning as well as the means by which we could put our respective abilities to work for the students at Saginaw High. It helped immensely that the language arts teachers in Kathie's school district had been talking with their university partners for some time about their classrooms; university academics had already shed the image of remote outsiders with little interest in the practicalities of schools. Both groups had committed their energies to the prospect that university/school collaborations can and ought to be formed, not simply to create a better understanding across institutions, although this has been one of their outcomes. We discovered that such partnerships enrich the individual activities we pursue in academic settings. The possibilities that Kathie and I were privileged to explore came from such commitments as well as from the time and resources that allowed us to collaborate.

As we planned and taught together, we learned a great deal from each other about our individual roles, our relationship with each other and our students, and the life of the classroom we built together. We made our blunders together, and we celebrated our successes over a beer at Holly's Landing, a



NATALIE PEDROZA, BUILDING A TREE HOUSE WHERE WE CAN PLAY, 1995

local pub. Our original plans for the cross-age teaching project had to be scrapped, for example, because we had planned our visits to the elementary school too close together and too close to final exams in January. After thinking about the schedule over night, Kathie came in the next morning and explained what concerned her; we changed the schedule. At the end of the year, as our students were writing the children's stories their elementary school partners would illustrate, we also both sat dumbstruck when Lee, our ne'er do well student, came into first period class asking to read the story he had drafted, "The Scarecrow who Scared the River Spotless." The previous day, the students had shared their story ideas for the children's book. When Lee's time came, he mumbled something barely coherent about a scarecrow. It was clear that he had made up this idea on the spot, but the other students in the class questioned, cajoled, and made suggestions to him about a plot he might use. To the best of our knowledge, it was the first time Lee had actually completed a writing task outside of school.

We also learned to reflect more deeply about our interactions with students and the aims of our instruction by drawing upon our individual perspectives about classroom events. I want to share a planning session between Kathie and me to illustrate how we worked together, pushing each other to find more effective means to build our students' understanding of texts and hence their own literate abilities. Our class had just begun to read *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, and Kathie and I were both concerned that the students were having difficulty following the different narrative voices in this complex novel. "I like the idea of having the students write about an experience and talking about if you would get more information if you recalled that incident to somebody else," Kathie began. "What kinds of information could someone else add?"

"Maybe we could use a school story since we're on 'Who am I in school?' You know, some kind of incident from school," I suggested.

"We could model stories," Kathie said.

"Yeah, we could model one or two for them. I remember a story about Gloria dur-

ing recess. It was hysterical," I responded thinking about the stories I might tell in class tomorrow.

"What do we want to do after that? Have them write in their journals?" Kathie asked.

"Do we want them to just write the story in their journals, or do we want them to do both—write their story and discuss what the differences might be," I wondered.

"Do you think it would help to have them assume another character in their narration and write the same story from that point of view? That's exactly what the writer is doing." Kathie was beginning to visualize what class will be like tomorrow.

"Yeah, that's great. Then we can use their stories and have them talk about how each one is different," I responded.

In class the next day, Kathie told a story about a friend from high school who got pregnant and had to give the baby up for

Partnerships enrich the individual activities we pursue.

adoption, even though she and the baby's father eventually married. It was a sad and poignant story, and the students responded with all kinds of questions, since most of the teenage girls they know who get pregnant keep their children. I also told my story about Gloria, whose skirt fell off one day during recess while we played dodge ball on the school playground. The stories made a good pair, providing the students with ideas for their own stories. They had more difficulty with changing the narrative perspective. One student, Lanette, however, did share a very funny story about painting her bangs with nail polish. She captured beautifully her mother's irritation when she discovered Lanette's after-school activities. It not only left the students rolling in the aisles but provided a wonderful example of perspective for them.

This kind of planning meeting had become familiar to us as we negotiated the curriculum amongst ourselves and our students. By the time we began to plan for our unit "Who am I in school?," the pattern of our interac-

tions had developed their own routines. The constructed nature of our collaborative teaching, enacted through the give-and-take of such conversations, involved us both in new activities with students and new relationships between school and university teachers. We had, in essence, established our own ways of talking about the classrooms we share, using our own shorthand that no longer needed detailed explanations. Below the surface of our talk, we had developed shared assumptions, derived from both our individual and collaborative experiences. We had generated a collaborative view of reading, writing, and the connections between them as well as the importance of modeling, sharing our lives with students, and inviting students to share their lives outside of school.

It is tempting to see Kathie's and my planning meeting as occurring effortlessly. Perhaps only Kathie and I can know how many conversations and classroom interactions took place to reach this level of ease. Judith Lindfors and Sarah Hudelson have described collaborations as "delicate balances." They suggest that successful collaboration is characterized by "its continuing and evolving nature; its essential dialogic character; and above all, its life within and dependence upon a relationship characterized by mutual trust, a relationship simultaneously affiliative and autonomous" (p. 3). For such relationships to occur, university and school partners need time, space, and the willingness to explore classrooms together. They need not only to respect but also to appreciate the expertise that each person brings to the collective effort, and they need to discover amongst themselves the mutual interests that will guide their work together. Sometimes, these interests reveal themselves suddenly, as happened with Kathie and me. Other times, interests accrue more slowly. Like stories, each partnership has its own plot, its own characters, and its own evolution.

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Voices from the Classroom:

Collaboration from a Teacher's Perspective

By Sharon Floyd

After fifteen years in the same classroom at the same high school, I began to experience symptoms of “teacher burnout.” The affliction occurs when a teacher feels worn down by the press of daily demands: too many classes and too many students with too many problems; too many papers to read and too many reports to fill out and submit; too many routine and dispiriting conversations with colleagues, administrators, and parents; too many public reports about what teachers and schools are doing wrong; all too little time to read new books or to reflect on what I was doing in the classroom. Teaching had been my calling since I was five years old and I still felt the call. But the pressures and routines of teaching had begun to get me down. When I walked into the classroom, something vital was missing, and I’m sure that my students were suffering because of the way that I was feeling.

In 1985, after a mid-semester teacher in-service (a service I had come to see as routine), one of my colleagues, Katherine Smith, told me about two university teachers and a presentation they had made about collaboration—about new ways for teachers across levels to work with one another on problems of teaching and learning. Because of my state of mind, I didn’t think that these two people would eventually change my life inside the classroom to the extent that they have: what did they know about the students I taught or the pressures I faced every day of my professional and personal life? But Kathy was so impressed that she began to tell all of us who had missed the session about a different way of teaching and about different ways to imagine our lives as teachers. Because her enthusiasm was contagious, all Saginaw Public Schools secondary language

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arts teachers were given the opportunity to attend a workshop led by Jay Robinson and Patricia Lambert Stock. This was our first introduction to programs offered through The University of Michigan’s Center for Educational Improvement through Collaboration (CEIC), which Robinson directed. What came after was more important than any single workshop.

I came away from this initial workshop amazed by the freshness and enthusiasm these university teachers exhibited and encouraged by their willingness to listen to us: to hear about our problems and to attend to



WILLIAM SIDNEY MOUNT, *THE NOVICE*, 1847

our hopes and aspirations. These early sessions, in which we explored our common understandings and identified problems of teaching and learning that we felt we could solve together, and in no other way, developed into several collaborative projects involving the assessment and teaching of writing and the place of writing instruction in a broader language arts curriculum. In our initial work together we encountered differences of experience and perspective that we had to negotiate and resolve: the idea of working on various projects with university personnel was uncommon in these parts at

that time and many teachers were apprehensive about getting involved with the unknown. But I was longing for a change and began to think, as time went on, that this just might be it.

Our administrators supported our efforts. Interested teachers were released from class time to attend many day-long in-service sessions in which we met and worked with various professors and graduate students from the University of Michigan. We were offered models for authentic assessment of student writing and were given practice in “read arounds” as a means of articulating standards for good writing; we were offered ideas for innovative and creative lessons. The way we were treated by Jay, Patti, and their university colleagues was very surprising to me and to many of my colleagues. We were not only treated as professionals but as equals as well. What we, as teachers, had learned and knew was always valued; what we had to say made a difference. Our opinions counted. If we desired change, it was up to us to effect it, working with but not relying upon our university colleagues.

Our work together moved from the workshop to the classroom and our university colleagues sometimes taught with us. We used collaboration extensively in planning and developing curriculum. We generated ideas in our group planning sessions and tested them out in our classrooms, returning to group sessions to improve them; we

tried out new ways of doing things which seemed valuable but had gone stale. I began to allow my students more freedom to plan and direct their learning and I was pleased with the results. Through a new awareness, I began to let the curriculum emerge and grow, following the direction of my students’ interests. The benefits of involving students in collaborative work were first made clear to me when I decided to solicit their help in designing the writing assessment that would be required of all Saginaw students.

We teachers had been asked to come up

with topics for a writing prompt that would challenge students and allow them to write freely and honestly (something that we did not find in state mandated tests or national models). With my eleventh grade students, we took a survey and brainstormed ideas about issues that concern teens. Many common issues emerged—teen pregnancy, problems with peers and with peer pressure, problems with parents and other adults, problems with school, issues of alcohol and drug use and abuse. The issue that most students ranked as number one, however, somewhat to our surprise, was teenage stress. The students argued, persuasively, that in treating this issue, many others could be addressed because they were indeed stressful. The excitement with which the students tackled this assignment was unbelievable, perhaps because they knew that their work would be used in the design of a writing assessment. Maybe a fresh approach was the answer. I was amazed.

From this initial exercise, I began to become convinced that the interest level of students increases as they are made partners in the planning of their own learning. Similar lessons were to come from the work we were doing together as teachers. Even though teachers on the same faculty teach the same subjects, none of us actually knew what other colleagues were doing in individual classrooms. After collaborating with university personnel, teachers began to see the value of planning with each other, sharing ideas that worked in the classroom and brainstorming about issues and problems that all of us face.

Collaboration is the best thing that has happened to me in my twenty-five year teaching career. It allowed the university to come into my classroom, providing access to materials and information that enriched my knowledge and re-directed my practice. Work with my university colleagues gave me the push I needed to make my teaching a viable and valuable experience for my students. Because of the collaborative experiences that I have been a part of, I am proud to be a teacher who tries to make a difference in the lives of my students; because of that experience, I know I am not alone.

Empowering Students through the Arts

By Sharon A. Olguin

In some schools and some classrooms, the arts are viewed as a powerful tool for stimulating students to investigate many ways of knowing. However, the arts in many schools have experienced budget cuts because of funding constraints and have become marginalized in the curriculum. Yet there are some classroom teachers who maintain a commitment to the inclusion of the arts in their programs of instruction. These individuals see the integration of the arts as a vehicle for helping students develop a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the reality of their world.

In my role as a clinical supervisor, I had the opportunity to work with two new teachers who had made a career change; both had extensive backgrounds in the arts. This teaching team was also placed in a school that had a diverse multicultural student population. As the teachers began to plan for instruction in their classroom, it was decided that the arts would be emphasized. It was their belief that the arts could inform the study of other subject areas in the curriculum, could raise an individual's self esteem, and had the potential for developing the critical thinking and creative abilities of the students, as they explored and learned about their world.

The children of this classroom were engaged in activities that incorporated the arts as both an instructional strategy and a discipline. Instruction in the visual arts was integrated daily. The lessons the students experienced taught them about the varied techniques and mediums used by famous artists, about style and about art history. Ample time was also given to children to practice using the techniques they were learning. Instruction helped the chil-

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dren compare and contrast their own work to the works of the artists they were studying. As their confidence grew, the children began to view themselves as artists, and began referring to the artists they were studying as if they were personal friends. They began excitedly to anticipate the arts instruction. With their increased knowledge base, they also began to compare and contrast the techniques and style of the various artists studied. Arts instruction in this classroom quickly became a means by which the student began to see themselves and the world around them.

They began to think critically about the quality of their own work. They also began to take more risks, learning from their mistakes, resulting in higher expectations for themselves.

The arts allowed the students from this multicultural setting to come together in order to form a community of learners. They shared a common bond and interest and had many opportunities to observe and discuss their work and that of their peers. Their teachers learned about the students' interests and strengths and began to get a glimpse of how the students viewed themselves. As the teachers' understanding grew, they learned that inclusion of the arts as an area of study had a larger purpose. The arts had become the vehicle that enhanced the development of the self esteem of the students in their classroom. They had created the conditions that allowed the students to develop the skills necessary to be problem solvers and critical thinkers. The development of these skills was valuable because of their application to the classroom and to their lifetime experiences. The teachers discovered the magic of empowering their students.

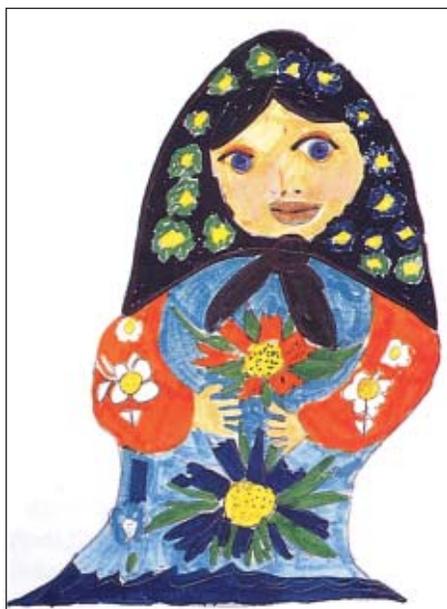
As I think about my return to the classroom, I find that this experience demonstrated the unlimited potential a strong arts program has for instruction and personal growth. It also offers a rationale for increased funding to the arts within our schools. No longer should the arts be marginalized. The arts are a powerful approach for learning and knowing.

Whitaker: the Arts

(continued from page 17)

Other kinds of images also come from learning situations: on page 11, *The Orrery*, a painting that Jules Prown has used as an example of learning through material objects; on page 12, *Moresque*, one of the patterns that teachers were studying in Kent Bloomer's seminar on architecture; on page 13, a photograph depicting a moment in our New Haven "improv" on *Woza Albert!*; and on page 19, a photograph of two young dancers from the Saint Joseph Ballet.

Finally, two images in this number, one drawn from European-American modernism



HUYVU TAHIKAWA, UNTITLED, 1995

and the other from a Native American tradition, point both to adjacent essays and to our larger concerns. Josef Albers' woodcut *Encircled*, on page 22, is a subtle instance of how lines and spaces can generate linkages, volumes, and dynamic process—a metaphor, if we take it so, for the collaborative movement itself. And the symbolic shield designed by Hyemeyohsts Storm and painted by Karen Harris, on page 6, evokes the understanding of the Plains People (set forth in fascinating detail by Storm's narratives in *Seven Arrows*) that art is a shared questing and teaching, a way of knowledge that leads us into the great balancing harmony of a universe that includes the entire family of the Earth's creatures.

Wrinkle Writing

By Susan Pearson-Davis

The Wrinkle Writing Project is a collaborative program which originated in the University of New Mexico's Department of Theatre and Dance in 1993. Its purposes are to use creative drama to enrich writing experiences in elementary and secondary classrooms, to encourage the inclusion of playwriting in the curriculum, and to use dramatic performance to publish student writing. Currently, most schools in Albuquerque do not include playwriting in the curriculum. Wrinkle Writing is driven by the belief that dramatizing the written word involves students not just intellectually and imaginatively, but physically, emotionally, and socially as well. Drama can provide a valuable addition to more traditional approaches to teaching and learning.

The idea for Wrinkle Writing emerged when I directed a stage adaptation of Madeleine L'Engle's Newbery Award winning novel, *A Wrinkle in Time* in the spring of 1993. L'Engle, a friend of UNM emeritus playwriting professor, Robert Hartung, accepted our invitation to visit UNM to teach a writing workshop. Although the Department already had strong ties with Albuquerque high school drama teachers, I hoped that L'Engle's visit would help us forge a relationship with elementary and secondary language arts teachers that focused on writing. L'Engle wanted her workshop to be intergenerational, including children and teens as well as adults, so her desires dovetailed with mine.

I called colleagues from the College of Education for advice on making L'Engle's workshop useful to teachers and children. Education Professor, Don Zancanella, who heads the Rio Grande Writing Project, a chapter of the National Writing Project, provided me with the names of elementary and secondary writing teachers who would be good at designing a conference surrounding the L'Engle workshop. The twelve teachers who agreed to help us were all members of the Rio Grande Writing Project, so they had a strong philosophical commitment to writing process that blended beautifully with

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the process-orientation of creative drama. Several meetings later, the outlines of the Wrinkle Writing Project (named in honor of L'Engle's famous novel) emerged, and the Rio Grande Writing Project agreed to fund teacher stipends for the professional development training that teachers would need. Although L'Engle had to postpone her visit until March of 1995, the project kept "Wrinkle" in the title, took on a life of its own, and has grown to be more than a single visit by a famous writer.

Wrinkle Writing now has four components. The key component is professional development of teachers. We train participating teachers in: methods for using creative drama and writing workshop techniques; the basic concepts of playwriting; and how to use dramatic staging techniques such as staged reading, story theatre, and readers' theatre to stage their students' written works. These team-taught training sessions include Saturday morning workshops throughout the school year and an intensive two week institute in the summer. UNM playwriting professor and Emmy Award winner, Digby Wolfe covers playwriting; classroom teacher Julia Huchmala and author Jeanne Whitehouse teach about writing processes; and I teach the creative drama. Participating teachers then use these concepts and techniques in their classrooms, and their students create portfolios of writing stimulated by dramatic improvisations. Once a teacher has taken one of our training workshops, that teacher's classroom is eligible to be a part of the other components listed below. Teachers also receive our bi-monthly *Wrinkle Writing Newsletter* and an extensive curriculum guide.

The second component is the portfolio competition that culminates in a visit by a luminary guest writer. Each year, Wrinkle Writing brings a well-known author or playwright to the University of New Mexico. Students from participating classrooms who want to attend a two-day intensive workshop taught by that writer, submit two selections from their portfolios. A panel of ten writing teachers reads the submissions and selects the top forty young writers to come to the UNM campus and attend that workshop. Teachers who have served as portfolio competition judges also earn the right to attend.

In addition, guest writers give a talk for all teachers, students, and parents of students in participating classrooms. Madeleine L'Engle was this year's guest writer. Last year's was Newbery Award winner, Paul Fleischman.

We designed the third component, the performance troupe, for teachers who want an intensive immersion in drama. We select up to twelve teachers from those who apply and assign a UNM theatre student to visit their classroom and work with their students twice a month for an entire school year. The UNM theatre student leads improvisational drama activities to introduce the concepts and processes of theatre and to stimulate ideas for first drafts. Then the UNM student organizes informal classroom readings and performances of these drafts so students can see their work on its feet for purposes of revisions. Finally, the theatre student directs them in a production of their works that they present for the whole school. Teachers find that this extensive demonstration of drama techniques in their own classroom allows them to learn more about what we've introduced in the professional development workshops.

The fourth component of Wrinkle Writing is its showcases. The UNM Department of Theatre and Dance produces a showcase of short works, written and performed by Wrinkle Writing students who have been in the performance troupe. This gives students the experience of creating costumes for their scenes and performing them in a fully equipped theatre on campus. The Department of Theatre and Dance provides a flexible modular set they can arrange as needed to serve their scripts and full stage lighting. The performance is free and open to the public, but heavily attended by parents, relatives, and friends.

The portfolio competition generates so much good writing that we are adding several more showcases. Next year, UNM theatre students will tour a production of selected Wrinkle Writing pieces to Albuquerque elementary and middle schools. Also next year, a local youth theatre group, Theatre-in-the-Making, is joining forces with Albuquerque Little Theatre, to produce a selection of works from the portfolio competition. These will allow the young playwrights

to see their work in a polished, professional production either by college actors at UNM or by accomplished child and teenage actors. In some cases, the directors will work with the young playwrights on any necessary revisions so they learn what a collaborative art form theatre is. This link to community theatres as well as to schools significantly enriches the collaboration.

Thus far, the project has reached approximately 55 teachers and nearly 2000 students from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Two of our most active classrooms are at the Zuni Pueblo, and we have had bilingual students submitting work in Spanish as well as English. The UNM theatre students working for us include Na-

A Reader, A Writer

A writer is a person who paints,
whose pallet holds words
whose mind holds visions.
A mind filled with joy and thoughts.

A reader is a person with the gift
of seeing the meaning of the writer's work
and hears the voiceless message
who sees the colorless picture.

But the reader and the writer
hold one thing alike,
an imagination.

Rosa Citlali Zamora

tive Americans, Hispanics, and African Americans, as well as Anglo/European Whites. They provide important role models for our young writers. Participating classrooms also represent the entire spectrum of ability levels. Along with their creative writing, portfolio competition participants must submit a "Process Paper" discussing how and why they wrote their works. In this way, judges can take into account a student's dedication and motivation in addition to talent.

We were fortunate to be able to build on an existing network of excellent elementary and secondary writing teachers through the

Rosa Citlali Zamora, eleven years old, lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A voracious reader, she began pursuing writing seriously when she was nine.

Rio Grande Writing Project and these teachers have inspired us with their talent, enthusiasm, and commitment. They quickly discovered how to integrate drama into subjects across the curriculum and have used it to teach literature, art, science, and social studies as well as creative writing in all genres. The quality of dramatic writing done by these teachers in the professional development workshops has been excellent. Some of them have seen their work produced in UNM showcases along with plays written by graduate and undergraduate theatre majors. Their excitement at discovering their playwriting ability adds depth and passion to their work with students.

Wrinkle Writing has also affected the lives of the students who have participated. Those who are shy about putting pen to paper are often very happy to get up and improvise dramatic situations, then write alone or in groups to capture on paper what they've just enacted. We treat our young writers as professionals. They sign contracts if we select their work for production and they see their writing taken seriously by their peers, college students and faculty, teachers, and parents. We give awards or certificates to all participants. Our guest writers also approach the children as colleagues and fellow writers.

The collaboration has had some other unexpected benefits. It has opened up exciting areas for research in the interaction between creative drama processes and writing processes. The knowledge and expertise of the participating teachers have expanded the horizons of the college faculty and vice versa. (I am integrating writing into my regular college courses in creative drama and acting in ways I never expected!) The theatre education and playwriting programs within the UNM Department of Theatre and Dance have come closer together, with more theatre education students taking playwriting while more playwriting students are exploring the opportunities available in teaching. Theatre majors are receiving invaluable classroom teaching experience guided by excellent teachers. More lines of communication are opening up between the Department of Theatre and Dance and the College of Education. The intergenerational nature of the project has had a profound effect on all of us.

On Common Ground

Strengthening Teaching through School-University Partnership

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SERGIO ROMAN, STOP! SAVE THE WHALES, 1995

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