



ARTS IN EDUCATION

N E W S L E T T E R

ARTS IN EDUCATION COUNCIL OF B.C.

P.O. Box 62023, Arbutus R.P.O.

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THE ARTS IN EDUCATION
NEWSLETTER

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“The intrinsic value of the arts relates to emotional education, aesthetic experience, creativity, spirituality, holism and to other related aspects of one’s interior dimension and to that connection with the universal human condition – a kind of transcendence. Without this aspect in our lives, we are not human – we are machines.”

– MICHAEL WILSON, Ed.D
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

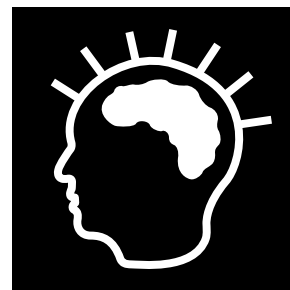
The Arts Education Argument...

— CONTINUED! —

In our last Newsletter (Winter, 2000), we examined a range of recent writing and research on arts in education policy. Do we argue the case for the arts in the schools by pointing to how they might enhance learning outcomes in other subjects such as math, reading and so on? Or should we listen to a growing number of prominent educators who say “be careful with this argument”, lest we betray the arts in our attempts to justify them. We’ve had lots of response and the message from our readers seems to be “We need **both** approaches,” particularly in an economic and political climate where school arts programs are in continuing jeopardy.

There is a huge amount of anecdotal evidence supporting, at the very least, correlations between the arts and the learning of other skills and behaviours. Research or not, solid proof or not, most arts educators would point to all sorts of benefits. At the same time, most of these educators will vehemently defend the singular ability of an arts experience to touch our souls and make the mundane sublime. This should need no justification. From our point of view it seems paramount that the arts in the schools should be supported for their own sake. As well, though, we should admit the reality of crossover effects, and push for more definitive research in that area. Certainly, as we’ve said before, we need all the ammunition we can get.

Read on, for some more notes on this kind of study.



(continued on page 2)

THE ARTS EDUCATION ARGUMENT... *continued!*

MORE RESEARCH NEEDED

The leading researchers here and in the U.S. seem to agree that although existing studies are finding lots of correlational links between arts and academic achievement, they still can't nail down a causal relationship between them. The consensus is that much more research is needed before we can safely make these claims. In the U.S., a 2000 conference at the Getty Center in Los Angeles debated the question: "Beyond the Soundbite: What the Research Actually Shows About Arts Education and Academic Outcomes". Thirty invited conferees from the U.S., the Netherlands and the U.K. looked at existing studies on the relationship between teaching and learning in the arts and measures of academic achievement (the detailed "Reviewing Education and the Arts Project" (REAP) papers are in *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol.34, Nos. 3/4, Fall/Winter 2000. The REAP study was conducted under the auspices of Harvard Graduate School of Education's Project Zero).

In a paper entitled "SAT and the Arts", Kathryn Vaughn and Ellen Winner state:

Our analyses demonstrate that students who take any kind of art course in high school have higher SAT scores (both math and verbal) than students who take no art courses at all. Moreover, those who take four years of arts courses have higher scores than those who take some art but less than four years' worth.

However, we cannot conclude from these findings that taking arts courses will result in higher SAT scores because the data are purely correlational and allow no causal inference. The link between SAT scores and arts courses has many possible explanations besides the possibility that exposure to the arts itself leads to the kind of cognitive growth that would be reflected in higher SAT scores. Alternative explanations include the possibility that students who choose to study the arts are high achievers to begin with. It is possible that high-achieving students come from families that value both academic achievement and the arts... .

In another paper, "Strengthening Verbal Skills through the Use of Classroom Drama: A Clear Link", Ann Podlozny finds **both** correlational and causal evidence that classroom drama helps students develop skills in reading, writing and understanding .

American high school students involved in theater are more proficient readers than are non-theater students... . American students who report studying drama in high school also score significantly higher on their verbal SAT than do those who take no arts. Studying drama in high school in Britain is related to success on national examinations in English. And Dutch students who take drama outside of school increase their vocabulary when tested on words

related to their drama activities.

However, Ms. Podlozny also has words of caution. She says:

.....(w)hile there are some solidly crafted studies in this area of research, too many studies suffer from serious design flaws, including lack of randomization of samples, lack of statistical analysis of data, and under-reporting of results.(i)t is imperative that good research practice is demanded, acknowledged and supported throughout the field. ... If we work to build on what we already know, conducting well-designed, carefully planned studies, we can only increase our understanding of how drama can serve as a creative and effective tool for learning that extends beyond drama itself.

In dance, Judith Lynne Hanna, writing in *Dance Magazine*, January 2001, agrees that "understanding the processes of dance teaching and learning and their potential to affect other areas of study will require more research, given the limited number of scientifically verifiable studies." Referring to the REAP studies, she says, "of the 3,714 potentially relevant dance studies identified through electronic database searches and queries to more than 200 researchers in arts education, only seven studies met specific scientific criteria for inclusion." She is optimistic that further study will indeed provide the evidence:

New research, beyond those studies identified by REAP, may well demonstrate that dance education leads to improved work habits, attitudes, creative risk-taking and attention to form and multiple meanings. ...We must ask: What are the mental skills in creating and perceiving dance that students acquire through a well-designed dance education program? How can these skills transfer to, for example, reading and math? Careful research conducted by teams of dance experts and cognitive scientists would document what many of us already believe intuitively and know from our experience in teaching dance.

The REAP study also looked at music education. Based on 25 music studies, they found evidence that *listening* to music leads to temporary improvement in spatial-temporal reasoning. In 19 of the music studies, the evidence suggested that *learning to make music* improves spatial-temporal reasoning and six studies indicated that *further music training* improves math and enhances reading.

Overall, one could say that the REAP study showed that there **are** wide-ranging benefits from including the arts in the curriculum. However, all the writers call for more research in order that we may safely and legitimately trumpet these benefits to governments, school boards, and school administrations.

(continued on page 3)

THE ARTS EDUCATION ARGUMENT... *continued!*

SOME LOCAL ARGUMENTS

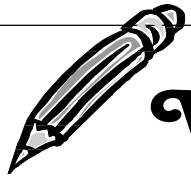
On the theme of music in education, the Vancouver Sun has jumped into the fray with a truly impressive two week series (March 3 - 16, 2001). The Sun's journalists have exhaustively examined both sides of the argument, with plenty of colourful documentation and comment for all opinions. They look at brain research, inner-city school music programs in Los Angeles, testimonials from local students and teachers of music, bring us up to date on physicist Gordon Shaw (*"Is the Mozart Effect for Real"*, by Karen Gram), and reexamine the reputed partnership of "math and music". It is a tour de force in favour of music education and most of the good things said about music could equally be applied to any of the arts in the schools.

Close to home, one program cited is that of Dr. Peter Gouzouasis, associate professor in music education, UBC, who is currently training a group of 35 student teachers to incorporate music, drama and visual arts into the elementary curriculum. "So for example, on a unit about explorers, the students could write or learn a song about them using syncopation and improvisation. Music helps make meaning of the material, he says. As well, turning the material into a song makes the learning more active, and studies have shown that active learning lasts much longer and resonates much more than passive learning." (From an

article by Karen Gram in the Vancouver Sun's Music in Education series, March 7, 2001, p. A14)

In a recent CBC Open Line on the topic of Music in Education, many callers rang in with personal stories of how school music experiences had shaped their future lives - as musicians, teachers of music, businesspersons, etc. Several spoke of their gains in self-confidence, presentation skills, math and science success, and the sense of "belonging" engendered in a school band, for example. Program guest Peter Stigings, former music program head at Magee Secondary in Vancouver, said that music education is "aesthetic fitness" and all students need to be exposed to it, just as they are to sports. In a similar vein, the Coalition for Music Education Chairman, Norman Mould called in to say that the "3 Rs" should be replaced with the "3 As" - arts, academics and athletics.

More research, and more public and media attention to the issue of arts in education can only be a good thing. We commend The Vancouver Sun and CBC for their coverage of the music in education topic and hope to see future articles on how our schools are including visual arts, drama and dance in their curricula. And, we're keeping a close eye on the latest research, here in Canada, and in the U.S.!



We Get Letters!

We were pleased to discover that our Winter Newsletter got some readers thinking. Below, a couple of letters:

Editor:

Is an education in the arts helpful for a student's study in other areas of the curriculum? How could it not be? Studies in the arts are going to benefit studies in other disciplines, as the student learns skills in one area which transfer well to others. For example, students in my concert bands learn how to work effectively as a member of a team, which probably helps them in their studies of government, citizenship, and basketball. What about the more "artistic" things students learn in band: how to express themselves creatively, or how to pursue artistic excellence? I believe that these abilities impact progress and success in other fields, and have a positive impact on the student's life in general. But to argue that music classes are valuable ONLY because they enhance student's successes in other areas is to ignore the value of arts education in and of itself. While I would certainly encourage my students and their parents with information on how music contributes to and

enhances other aspects of study and of life, I wouldn't describe it as the ONLY benefit of arts education; rather, it's one of the MANY benefits.

Heather Dreger,

Director of Bands

Gladstone Secondary School, Vancouver

Editor:

I read with interest the current issue of AIE Newsletter. I would like to offer the following modest comments. related to your editorial "The Arts Education Argument":

1. The case for the arts in schools must be made on all fronts - both for the intrinsic value of the arts themselves, and for the extrinsic transfer of learning enhancement in other areas.

2. The intrinsic value of the arts relates to emotional education, aesthetic experience, creativity, spirituality, holism and to other related aspects of one's interior dimension and to that connection with the universal human condition - a kind of transcendence. Without

(continued on page 4)



We Get Letters!

(continued from page 3)

this aspect in our lives, we are not human - we are machines.

3. As you point out, Gardner (1999) holds up for examination, the issue of whether the arts makes one smarter or more skilled. Of course they do. But they essentially accomplish this through the fulfillment they afford the practitioner. If we are engaged meaningfully in anything, we are more appropriately intelligent.

4. As you quote, Winner and Cooper (2000), suggest rightfully, that direct causal relationships between arts experience and better overall school improvement, are difficult to make. The opposite causation is somewhat easier. Studies have shown a more direct effect when the antecedents of the arts (i.e. play) are removed from child experience. In short, no play, no arts, no humanity.

5. As we live in a mainstream culture that does not value intrinsic or spiritual individuality, we must include those links from the arts to other areas. In a sense, we must politicize our rationale to meet the apparent concerns of our politicians, of the mainstream of our national educational objectives. We live in a time of public policy retrenchment, where schooling is seen as highly utilitarian, in very specific terms. So, arts advocates must have all bases covered, so that whatever the priority generally seen for schooling, we have a rationale that fits. Otherwise there is nothing stopping policy makers from suggesting that basic schooling need not include any emotional, affective, creative or aesthetic development. If parents want that, let them pay for it privately.

Michael Wilson, Ed.D
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa

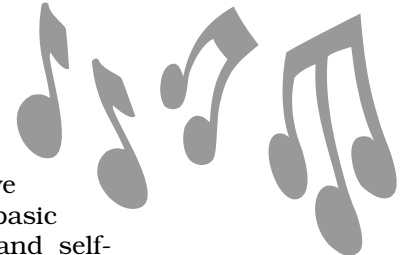
MUSIC FOR MUSIC'S SAKE – CLINTON MARSHALL

At the recent B.C. Music Educators Conference in Victoria, American educator Clinton Marshall spoke vehemently on the “art for its own sake” side of the debate. Marshall, coordinator of the office of music for the Baltimore County Public Schools in Maryland, said “Why isn’t what we do enough? ... We teach young people to recognize beauty and order and form in their lives, we give them greater skill in self-expression and a deeper understanding of themselves and others. We help them to understand some of the greatest feats of human achievement - a Mozart sonata, a Rembrandt painting, a Shakespeare play. We give them skills to understand themselves and to express themselves in a non-verbal way. Why do we need to be more? Isn’t that at least as valuable as a higher exam score?”

Marshall went on to defend the arts’ place in the core

curriculum along with math, science, reading and so on: “How can we, as a society, accept not educating the whole child, how can we overlook something as basic as self-understanding and self-expression?” He said the first step to moving fine arts instruction to a more central position in the education spectrum is for the teachers to become effective advocates. Then there must be acceptable, measurable and transferable standards of instruction that everyone - teachers, administrators, parents and students - recognize and accept.

(From a piece by Ian Dutton, Times Colonist (Victoria), February 24, 2001)



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In This Issue

Special Issue:

A Brief History
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...Not only do the arts
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...The visual and performing
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for Canadians; the arts can
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ethnic richness together into
the fabric of Canada.***

– MARGARET ANDREW
FOUNDING CHAIRPERSON
ARTS IN EDUCATION COUNCIL

CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS!

The Arts in Education Council of B.C. marks its 20th Anniversary this year. In this special edition of the Newsletter we present a brief history of the Council.

ARTS IN EDUCATION COUNCIL - TWENTY YEARS ON (1981 - 2001)

The Beginnings

It was in 1981 that a group concerned about the situation of the arts in education in B.C. came together in a meeting at U.B.C. and decided to establish a new provincial organization to advocate for the importance of the arts in education. This meeting was convened by the "Provincial Committee for the Encouragement of Arts in Education", under the chairmanship of Margaret Andrew (past chairman of the Vancouver School Board), and functioning under the aegis of the Community Arts Council of Vancouver. This committee had been set up as a result of the publication of the "Report on Arts in Education in British Columbia" in November, 1979, by a B.C. Committee of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, as part of the "National Enquiry into Arts and Education in Canada" carried out by the C.C.A.

After considerable discussion with the Provincial Registrar of Companies as to the name of the new organization, approval was obtained on July 24, 1981 to incorporate under the Societies Act as the "Western Council of Arts in Education Associations". Though this is our registered name, the Council continues to operate on a day-to-day basis as the "Arts in Education Council".

The purposes of the Council as laid out in its Constitution are:

- (a) To foster awareness of the importance of the arts in education in British Columbia
- (b) To foster the growth of arts in education programs in British Columbia
- (c) To provide a forum for communication and liaison among organizations concerned with the arts in education in British Columbia
- (d) To make representations to the government of British Columbia, its various ministries (and to other government bodies) concerning the arts in education
- (e) To encourage training in the arts for professionals working in education in British Columbia.

("Beginnings" continued on page 2)

BEGINNINGS *(continued from page 1)*

The Council owes a large debt of gratitude to Margaret Andrew for her leadership in the beginning, for her tireless work in promoting the aims of the Council, and for her ability to persuade officials of governments and granting organizations into giving support to the Council in its early years. Grants from the McLean Foundation, the Vancouver Foundation, the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation and the Hamber Foundation allowed the Council to engage Virginia Cleary to visit key centres in the Province in 1981, to find out what was being done, see what help the Council could give, and act as a liaison for the Council. Margaret Andrew served as first chairperson of the Council, retiring from this position shortly after our incorporation, although she continued to attend meetings of the board until weeks before her untimely death in July, 1982. She felt strongly that *"the visual and performing arts must become an integral part of the general education of all students. ...Not only do the arts develop qualities of imagination which liven studies in other fields, but they encourage the discrimination and persistence necessary to the carrying out of any project. ...The visual and performing arts both build and describe a unique cultural identity for Canadians; the arts can help weave the threads of ethnic richness together into the fabric of Canada."*

It is Margaret Andrew's vision and conviction that has guided the Council over the years. At heart our commitment has always been to the intrinsic value of the arts in our lives, and to the great importance of starting with the young, in the school system, to ensure that education in the arts is as central as that of mathematics, science or sports. Over the years the Council has been involved in the preparation of many publications (see sidebar on page 3), briefs and

submissions to the Ministry of Education, School Boards, University and College Boards and other bodies concerned with arts and education. We have also sponsored special meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences to share information and facilitate action in the arts and education field. Membership in the Council is open to anyone with an interest in the arts in education, either as an organization or an individual.

The Council continues to be indebted to the late Dr. Geoffrey Andrew and the Andrew family for making possible the continuing work of the Council through their generous donations in memory of Margaret Andrew. Funding of organizations is always a problem. The Council has been fortunate to receive support over the years from many members and friends, as well as from foundations and government granting agencies for special projects.

The Council is also indebted to those members who have taken on the responsibility of leading the organization through the past twenty years. These include **Margaret Andrew (1981)**, **Norman Robinson (1981-82)**, **Art Vallis (1982-86)**, **Jean Cunningham (1986-95)**, and **Pat Hindmarch-Watson (1995-Present)**. The operation of the Council is completely volunteer, and as we are not beholden to any level of government or agency for expenses, we can offer a somewhat unique and independent voice on the subject of arts in education.



Looking Back to 1981

When we look back into our files and publications from 1981, we find that although much has changed in education at all levels, our concerns and dreams regarding the position of the arts in our schools remain fundamentally the

same. It is worthwhile re-examining some of the 37 recommendations of the original 1979 Report (B.C. Committee of C.C.A. National Enquiry), as outlined in a Council publication, "What's the Fuss", in 1981. It is heartening to see that we have made some significant advances in some areas, while, sadly, we continue to fight on some other issues.

Teacher education in the arts was seen as a key factor in the quality of arts activity. There was a strong recommendation that *"universities having Faculties of Education and Fine and Performing Arts Programs in other faculties should examine admission requirements for these faculties so that appropriate secondary level arts courses could be designated as acceptable for credit toward university entrance."* Another recommendation stated that, *"More emphasis should be given to providing opportunities for specialist training in the arts, and provisions should be made to encourage in-service upgrading of skills."*

Allocation of time for the arts in schools, with increasing competition from more and more compulsory courses, was a concern back then, as it is now. It was recommended that the Ministry of Education, and School Districts, *"explore ways of allocating more time for the arts at the elementary level, particularly for drama and dance which are not now recognized as separate courses at this level."* The report stresses again that we should *"have appropriate secondary level art courses designated as acceptable to meet university entrance requirements for students going into Education and Fine and Performing Arts programs. It is interesting to note the recommendation that arts opportunities be extended at the secondary level by "requiring at least one arts course in Grade 8..."*,

("Looking Back" continued on page 3)

LOOKING BACK

(continued from page 2)

an idea which has seen fruition in the current secondary fine arts requirements as mandated in the 1988 Royal Commission on Education.

Back in 1981, the disappearing **specialist teacher** was an issue, as it is today. One recommendation was to *“have a minimum of one arts coordinator for each school district, and preferably a coordinator for each discipline. Where individual coordinators are not feasible, designate an area resource person for each discipline who has specialized knowledge and is aware of both school and community resources.”* In recent years we have seen a dramatic decline in the number of district coordinators – this is one recommendation that remains a dream. The report also urged the planning of *“consultative services for elementary teachers lacking minimum arts education methods and training.”*

An area that has seen some considerable progress is that of **curriculum development**. In 1981, there was a call to *“provide updated elementary curriculum guides and resource material for visual arts and crafts, music, drama, dance and movement.”* And, we realize how far we have come in media literacy, computers, and so on, when we read Recommendation 24, which states, *“Encourage teachers to understand media, to use its resources as a tool, and to develop sequential curricula enabling students to learn about media and use it in creating films, radio programs, newspapers, etc.”*

The presence of arts events and facilities in the larger **community** were seen as a valuable and essential resource for arts education, particularly for artists-in-school programs. *“Make ‘aesthetic fitness’ a target for the 1980’s”*, exhorted Recommendation 32. *“Explore ways of developing*
(“Looking Back” continued on page 4)

The Council In Print

Many of the Council’s accomplishments in the past twenty years can be seen in terms of its publications, including:

What’s the Fuss! A Community Arts Campaign Kit (1981) - a booklet outlining what can be done to strengthen the role of the arts in education through community action.

Learning Through the Arts-Join Us (1984) - a booklet bringing together current information and resources of assistance to those trying to build support for the arts in education programs.

Monographs:

“The Importance of the Fine Arts Supervisor” (1983)

“The Community Arts Council as School Arts Advocates” (1985)

“The Trustee as Arts Advocate” (1985)

“The Teacher in Expressive Arts Education” (1985)

“The Administrator and Arts Advocacy” (1985)

Status Report on Fine Arts Education in B.C. (1986)

“A Career in the Arts” (1988) - brochure

“The Other Room - Themes in Art Education” (1990)

- describes some of the entries in the Celebration of the Arts program, where elementary schools were invited to submit programs of particular merit and quality, for special recognition by the Council.

Graduation Fine Arts Questionnaire: Summary of Findings (2000)

Students were questioned about the new, compulsory Fine Arts 11 course, from October 1986 to May 1998. A total sample of 1021 students answered, from five districts.

LOOKING BACK (continued from page 3)

support for art education programs for children, both in and out of school." And, "examine ways of funding more effectively artists-in-school programs and touring arts programs, and of providing specialized resources to smaller communities." For example, the Council has long felt that not enough use is made by schools of the many resources offered by B.C.'s large art galleries and museums.



Looking Ahead

The education system in B.C. has undergone many changes since 1981. We've seen a Royal Commission, several different governments, and the Year 2000 initiative which has seen some, but not all of the Royal Commission's recommendations implemented. Through it all, the Council has steadfastly continued to lobby for a prominent place for the arts in the curriculum from K to 12. The educational climate may have

changed - more demands on student and teacher time, more required courses, less money and fewer dedicated facilities all conspire to make arts education today a vastly more complicated business than even twenty years ago. The late George Woodcock, in his foreword to the 1979 C.C.A. Report (B.C. Committee), lamented that our ideas of education were too "tainted by...the vision of the job at the end of the rainbow. ...Education too easily becomes training..." He went on to say that "education through art...is education based on the knowledge that, however important a critical and practical mind may be in dealing with the material facts of everyday existence, life is not merely a matter of information and techniques. It is a matter of imagination and sensibility as well, and only if the creative and intuitive faculties are developed to balance the intellectual and practical ones, shall we have happier and more integrated human beings." Ironically, since those words were written, the explosion

in computer technology has produced a veritable cornucopia of arts-related jobs that require a cunning combination of technical training and creativity and imagination. We think that this bodes well for the inclusion of the arts in the school, but with a caution - computers may be the tools of a future career in theatre, film, music, graphics, etc., but they work best with the input of creativity and imagination engendered by hands-on arts experiences in all disciplines, from an early age. Back in 1981, Margaret Andrew said: "Arts are the soul of education", we firmly believe, but we also believe they are part of the flesh and blood of education as well." After twenty years, we continue to advocate for this central, and essential position of the fine arts in our children's schools.



This brief history was compiled by Council members Elizabeth Lane and Joanne Cram.

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FALL 2001

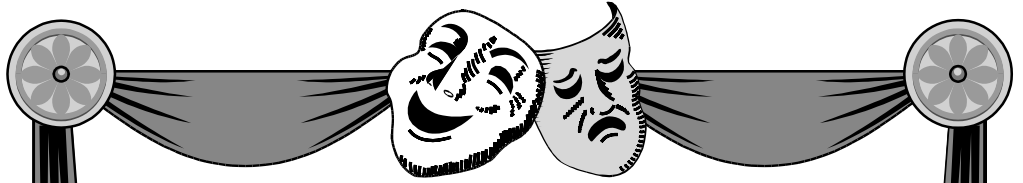
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*An integrated, well
educated human being
needs to experience a
balance between the
practical, 'scientific',
orderly, systematic
perspective with
the spontaneous,
imaginative, feeling side
of life that the arts
nurture.*

– EDWARD EPP
ARTIST, COUNSELLOR,
ART TEACHER



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The 2001 Annual General Meeting
of the**

**Arts in Education Council of B.C.
will take place**

**Wednesday, October 24, 2001
from 4:30 to 6:00 pm**

at

**Henry Hudson Elementary School
1551 Cypress Street, Vancouver**

**(If doors are locked, enter through the
York Street daycare entrance)**



4:30 pm Refreshments

**5:00 pm Round Table Discussion:
"What is the Unique Role
of the Arts in Education
Council?"**

5:45 pm Annual General Meeting



Everyone Welcome!

For information call: 228-9589

MEDIA LITERACY: Arts Educators Can Help

Many of us are alarmed at the torrent of commercial, media, and cyber culture directed at our children. We can forgo television, monitor movies and publications, and oversee computer use, but even the most sheltered of children are going to be affected by what is often blatant manipulation of youth to be "cool", buy certain products, watch certain shows and behave in certain ways. We deplore the promotion of materialism and the use of young, impressionable minds to reap huge profits. At the same time, the arts are the important tool in some very successful advertising, using music, dance, colour, fabulous computer graphics and creative scripts to make us say "Wow, that's cool!". And, the argument, "Study art, or music, in school, and have a satisfying career later on", has a lot more punch these days when one sees the myriad of commercial possibilities for the graduate in "media arts". How do we advise children to embrace all the creative advantages of new technology, while cautioning them of the media's dark side?

Teachers in the arts have a role, and a responsibility, to arm kids with the ability to filter and discriminate, to develop critical faculties. In a recent issue of the Arts Education Policy Review (Vol. 102, No. 6, July/August 2001), several educators examined this issue. Contributing writers didn't mince words. Diane Samples writes:

"What are we to do about the corporate-sponsored disintegration of childhood? Those who have elevated profits over the well-being of children must reexamine their motives and take more responsibility for their effect on children."

Samuel Intrator says:

"The marketers and advertisers understand how to seduce our children. They spend a fortune trying to discern the tastes, dispositions, and preferences of our youth."

And, Tom O'Brien remembers Plato's statement in *The Republic*, that the arts can be used in all

sorts of ways, some not always pure. He cites the use of the arts in inciting young men to go to war, to sing the praises of questionable patrons, or to follow a certain religion. Now, he says,

*"the emphasis is on getting people, at younger and younger ages, to buy such and such. Artists have undoubtedly used the arts to make people think, and many artists along with scholars of the arts are heroes of thought. However, the arts can also be used to help people **not** think."*

O'Brien goes on to ask:

"What will be the impact of TV-addicted generations on fostering creativity in general? How large will the audience be for the arts in the future if the American mind is dumbed-down to responding to ads?"

What to do? Diane Samples puts forward a strong case for media literacy education, stating that it involves much more than teaching kids about the advertising and market forces that imperceptibly shape their lives, "seeking to snatch their childhood from them":

"It involves the application of critical thinking skills to all forms of mass media, including film, television, news, journalism, music, photography, video games, the Internet, and so forth. Media literacy education assists kids in the development of a conscious relationship with media. It teaches them to process media messages with their heads, not their hearts and emotions."

We need to know our clientele better, says Intrator. Just as advertisers spend millions looking for the next youth trend and then developing products to tap into this pulse, teachers must make the effort to understand and then engage their students in experiences that amuse and entertain, without, of course, compromising academic standards or educational outcomes.

"Educators must learn to design and stage these experiences, in which students become active players. Examples of staged experiences include publishing Web e-zines, participating in mock trials, publishing arts and literary journals, and putting on plays. ... The need to understand the pedagogy and structure of these staged experiences, a staple of good art education, will be a boon for the field."

As well, states Intrator, we must be as technologically adept as our students, really understand hypermedia and its combination of texts, images, sound and movement:

"...our youth have grown up with a joystick in one hand and a mouse in the other. Operating these tools has given them practice in reading multimedia, morphing images, displaying graphics, and controlling a virtual environment. This is a powerful strength that we need to support while advancing our own agenda for fostering creative and analytical thinkers."

A fact that rings loud and clear is that it is more important than ever to have a strong arts component in the schools, to enable children to experience and appreciate Beethoven as well as Eminem and to be able to look at both with a critical eye. Several writers stressed that without vibrant and engaging school arts programs, and with a continued onslaught of "dumb" media content, we are in danger of losing our audiences for more traditional art experiences. (Classical music concert audiences are, for example, 'aging'). And, as always, we need to have good courses at the university level for artists and arts teachers, covering ethical considerations such as art's relationship to commerce.

For the complete text of these articles and more on this complex issue, check out the **Arts Education Policy Review, July/August 2001**.

NEW MINISTER - BIG PLANS

Christy Clark, Education Minister, is extolling the advantages of “magnet” schools, as the Education Ministry seeks to create a more “consumer-driven” education system for B.C. She envisions greater input from parents and more “choice” of schools and school programs for their children. In a recent interview with the *Vancouver Sun* (27 Sept 01), Clark said, “Our system must be responsive to the needs of the children we are trying to educate. ...I would like to create a system that’s diverse, that recognizes every child is unique, that provides a whole range of different kinds of programs for children.” She said that the public system should “compete on an even footing with independent schools... .”

Magnet schools, which focus individually on specific areas of education such as science, computers, the arts, sports, etc., would allow students to cross boundaries to attend the programs of their choice. The system has been introduced with some success in urban U.S. and to some extent in Alberta. David De Silva, “Father Fame”, the man behind the movie, TV series and musical, about New York’s School for the

Performing Arts, is a big fan. In a *Vancouver Sun* article (8 Nov 99), he said:

“My big thing is the importance of the arts in anybody’s education, and whatever they go on to do, whether it’s designing or writing or painting scenery, actual participation in the arts is a very important thing, particularly in an age when young people are sitting in front of electronic equipment, getting further and further removed from real experience. ... I believe in the ‘magnet’ school for everything, from the arts to computer science, specializing in an area of education and taking kids out of their neighbourhoods.”

Of course, there are many opposing views of the magnet philosophy, citing elitism, already crowded facilities, breakdown of neighbourhood cohesion, and the difficulty of offering “choice” in rural areas with few existing resources. And, as arts advocates we wonder if a “science magnet” school would scrap the arts component altogether.

The Council will be following these developments - let us know your opinions and experiences.

AN ARTS PLEA FROM THE NORTHWEST

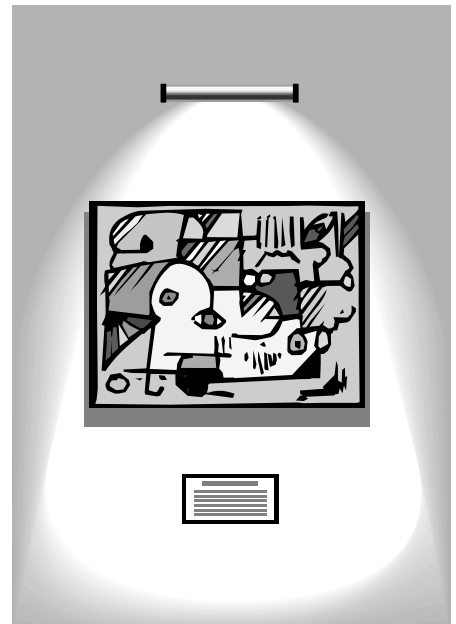
Edward Epp, artist, counsellor, art teacher, writes us from Terrace where this summer he organized an exhibit of the works of some of the students who studied Painting Art 105/106 which he taught for Northwest Community College in Terrace and for the Native Education Program in Hazelton, during 2000-01. He launched the show with mixed feelings, excited by the opportunity to display the students’ works, but dismayed by the fact that funding for the course has been cut for the upcoming year. Edward writes:

“First year students in Art 105 and 106, ... made the works in this exhibit. ...The students in Terrace had the pleasure of taking their classes leisurely over a period of eight months, while those in Hazelton at the First Nations Education Centre ‘crammed’ their artistry in a period of sixteen days or so, in two intensive workshops. Nevertheless, all worked arduously and with great enthusiasm. The chosen pieces

display that energy and diversity of approach. The paintings use acrylic and watercolour on canvas and paper, as well as mixed media collage. It was thrilling to work with the students, as a teacher, lecturer and fellow-artist.

I am convinced that given support, a strong regional school of art could evolve here. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to integrate the profound material culture of the First Nations with the gorgeous natural beauty of our surroundings. It was my dream that the courses offered through the college were a start in this direction. I invite those who have the authority to make such decisions to reconsider the one to cancel the painting course originally scheduled for this fall at Northwest Community College in Terrace.

It seems clear to me that more and more, art needs to be an integral part of our lives, our economy and our educational system. An integrated, well educated human being needs to experience a balance between the practical,



‘scientific’, orderly, systematic perspective with the spontaneous, imaginative, feeling side of life that the arts nurture. Lack of this balance in our region and in our society contributes to social disorder, disease and unhappiness. The arts have the capacity to provide an antidote to the predominantly materialistic bias of our culture. ...”

Hear, hear, Edward.

BUDGET-STRAPPED ART TEACHERS ALERT!

The Fall/Winter *ArtStarts* Newsletter has a great tip for cutting costs in the art room. Described as a “dating service for discards”, the Recycling Council of British Columbia’s Materials Exchange program (MEX), is a free referral service for people who have or want reusable materials.

A wonderful initiative to keep waste out of landfills, it’s also a great way to save money on everything from paint, plastic pails, cardboard and other paper products for your art projects. October is Recycling Month, so use

your imagination and contact the Recycling Hotline

(604-732-9253, 1-800-667-4321 toll free in B.C., or

hotline@rcbc.bc.ca) to order your free copy of the

MEX catalogue or have MEX staff search their database for your requests.

For more information and to get inspired by some amazing success stories, visit **www.bcbc.bc.ca** and follow the links to the Recycling Toolkit and their materials exchange program.

(Thanks to ArtStarts in Schools for a great item. You can visit them at <http://www.artstarts.com>).



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ARTS IN EDUCATION

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"When I examine myself and my method of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing knowledge."

– ALBERT EINSTEIN

"A" IS FOR ADVOCACY

In the ABCs of the arts in education sector, "A" is for Advocacy. More than ever, parents, teachers, administrators and students need to get together and press for protection of existing school arts programs, and lobby for more. In this province changes are afoot; as yet we don't know whether proposed educational "reform" will jeopardize the position of the arts in the curriculum, but the message is very clear that money is tight. What has been articulated is that the government recognizes that parents want more say in their children's education, and that the Ministry intends to listen. What a great opportunity for those parents who want more arts in the schools. However, parents are but one voice - advocacy gains its strength in numbers. Students, teachers, principals, the community at large and the media can, together, have a huge impact on policy if they do their homework and clearly identify their goals. One of these goals should be "the arts - music, dance, drama, visual arts - in every school". "More choice" of how and where our children are educated is a good theory only if the arts are an integral part of the basic curriculum that must be offered at every school.



Dennis Tupman, a former arts coordinator with the Vancouver School Board, has spoken and written at length on the subject of advocacy. Music educators will be familiar with some of his thoughts; in the following excerpts from a talk given at last year's BCMEA conference, the word "arts" can easily be substituted for "music".

"One of the hottest topics these days in music education is advocacy. To advocate is to imply that one can make a difference. Believe me, one can - if one works smart.

The Chinese have in their language for the word "crisis" two characters, one meaning fear and the other meaning opportunity. Every so-called negative can usually have a positive aspect. How we view this challenge stems from our own attitude as parents, or teachers.

I have seen this borne out time and time again over the years. In other words, advocacy starts within us. How do we view ourselves and our programs? What is our vision?

At this point we have to be careful because we are inclined to fool ourselves about our attitude. To be blunt, the collaboration of positive, competent directors, and proactive and supportive parents generally fosters good programs. As advocates we have to see "no", when directed towards us, as a challenge and not just the final answer. We have to see what we want in our program as actually happening in our imaginations. This vision should

(continued on page 2)

“A” IS FOR ADVOCACY *(continued from page 1)*

be clear so that it will pull us to action to fulfill this dream.

I have witnessed all across Canada positive differences being made when programs were being threatened. So first of all, we have to believe that we can actually make a difference. We must have no room for negative, whiny thoughts. Rather we must see our goal clearly and then involve the help of others to achieve that end. If we are reasonable in our wishes and act appropriately, it may take time but we usually win.

Furthermore, we have to be aware of the mountain of research that is supporting the inclusion, even the necessity, of music education in a general education. There are many competing interests out there, with trendy new programs. That does not mean that music and arts education must be sacrificed. Indeed, as John

Naisbitt and Pat Aburdene stated (in ‘Megatrends 2000’), we need to balance ‘high touch and high tech’ in our schools and in our personal lives. It is a help, therefore, for us to morally arm ourselves with the knowledge of the current research and support for arts education.

In Dennis Tupman’s “3 Ps of Advocacy”, it all starts from the heart (Passion), strengthened by certainty and optimism (Positiveness), and achieved by lots of Perseverance. Some other inspirational tips for arts advocacy? Read on....

- ✓ *Argue the case from the student’s perspective and/or benefit.*
- ✓ *Advance your cause not at the expense of someone else’s.*
- ✓ *Be prepared with background studies/research/readings.*
- ✓ *Be visible - use the media to*

advertise your cause.

- ✓ *Know clearly what you want, be sure it is reasonable and ‘doable’, know who can help you, determine what actions to take, and when to take them.*
- ✓ *Act in concert with supportive individuals and agencies.*
- ✓ *Work smart rather than hard.*
- ✓ *Strive for excellence rather than perfection.*
- ✓ *Network with others.*
- ✓ *Advocate through positive action and do not tear down some other group or individual. Think win/win.*
- ✓ *Think long term as well as short term.*
- ✓ *Always believe you can make a difference.*

Resolved for 2002: Persevere, with Passion and a Positive attitude! Happy New Year to all our readers.

COUNCIL NEWS

The October Annual General Meeting of the Arts in Education Council featured a lively round table discussion focusing on some of the big challenges facing arts in education today. Participants, including representatives from ArtStarts and the Coalition for Music Education agreed that there continues to be an unfortunate “cycle” of generalist teachers not receiving adequate training in the fine arts during their Faculty of Education years, thus not able to properly instruct their students at the elementary level. Then, their students go on to high school and beyond (perhaps themselves to teaching), with low arts appreciation or skills.

In recent years, Education faculties have been undergoing change; this has made it difficult to obtain a definitive answer on what arts courses are offered, which are compulsory and which elective in the generalist program.

The discussion group felt that if **all** the “players” (i.e. the universities

offering education degrees, the Ministry, the College of Teachers, the BCAA, our Council, ArtStarts, the Coalition, etc. etc.) could be assembled for a meeting or “forum”, a strategic plan for solving some of the problems might be devised. Enthusiasm was high!

The Arts in Education Council will act as conveners of such a meeting, and is now in the process of setting up a planning committee to identify the issues, invitees, desired outcomes, etc. Readers of this newsletter with ideas to contribute should contact Ron Rumak at his email: rumak@hudson.vsb.bc.ca



At the AGM, **Ron Rumak** and **Morag Cuthbertson** were elected Co-Chairs for the 2002 term; **Elizabeth Lane**, Treasurer; **Joanne Cram**, Secretary & Newsletter; **Pat Hindmarch-Watson**, Past Chair; **Nancy Lagana**, Member at Large; **Helene McGall**, **Aileen Molloy**, and **Dennis Tupman**, Corresponding Members.



“Music has the power to raise the human spirit, and it’s best to start early”

– BRAMWELL TOVEY,

CONDUCTOR OF THE VSO,

ON THE MERITS OF SYMPHONY

CONCERTS FOR AGES 4 TO 7.

ArtsSmarts – TWO YEARS ON

In 1998 The J. W. McConnell Family Foundation initiated ArtsSmarts, a national integrated arts program designed to bring schools, artists and communities together in arts activities that are linked to educational outcomes. Dance, music, drama, visual arts and new media arts are used to teach other subjects in the curriculum from K to 12.

For example, science is learned through music and visual art; math is taught through dance; history is learned through drama. The impact of the projects is broad and deep. Partners share and learn from their challenges and successes.

Children's educational experience is enriched through direct contact with the arts and professional artists. Communities value the presence of the arts and artists.

As with any project, evaluation is a key component of the process. A recent ArtsSmarts Evaluation questionnaire revealed both reasons for the program's success and some obstacles to be overcome:

Key factors for success:

- Administrative support and commitment to the project; for example, slotting projects within school schedules and/or allowing for adequate planning time.
- Adequate financial resources... .
- Teacher willingness to collaborate with the artist throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of the project.
- Artist's adaptation to the school culture....class rapport, instructional effectiveness, understanding of the curriculum.
- Positive classroom atmosphere achieved through mutually respectful interpersonal relationships among artists, teachers and students.

Key obstacles:

- Integration of projects into school schedules, and artists' adaptation to school culture.
- Insufficient time allocated to effectively implement the projects.
- Lack of appropriate space to effectively deliver projects as standard classrooms are not always

suitable venues for arts teaching.

- Finding artists who are available, affordable and able to teach young people.
- Groups and combined classes too large to be amenable to arts learning.

Generally, ArtsSmarts has garnered powerful testimonials from teachers, artists and project coordinators. In the Year 2 Evaluation process, common themes emerged, as participants found that the program "enhanced students' and teachers' arts learning and cultural appreciation through hands-on involvement in artistic processes and connections to the overall curriculum."

The program was also seen to raise students' self-esteem by engaging them in age-appropriate, creative activities, and develop connections between the school and the arts community.

In British Columbia, ArtsSmarts provides funds for artist/school collaboration, through ArtStarts. Their web address is www.artstarts.com

FALLING IN LOVE WITH MUSIC

By now everyone has heard the amazing story of the Langley Schools Music Project's re-released recording *Innocence and Despair*. The recording has gained praise from legions of fans from The Washington Post's music critic (who rated it one of 2001's 10 best albums!) to Rolling Stone Magazine (four-and-a-half out of five stars), to rock legend David Bowie. It all began in 1976 when music teacher Hans Fenger brought together an 80-voice choir of elementary school students from several Lower Mainland schools. Recording in a gym with a 15-piece band of percussion, bells and guitars and the natural echo of the room, the group recorded tracks of several Beach Boys tunes including *Good*

Vibrations and *Help Me Rhonda*, Neil Diamond's *Sweet Caroline* and The Eagles' *Desperado*. Fenger has said he wanted to give the students not only the performance experience, but some idea of the process of making a record. The resulting LPs were sold to students and parents.

Flash forward to 2001, A Victoria music fan finds a copy at a thrift store, sends it to a New Jersey disc jockey, Irwin Chusid, who likes it, contacts Fenger, and convinces two record companies to reissue the album in North America and Europe.

Back to the Washington Post Music Critic. David Segal wrote "Led by a hippie music teacher...

the kids play mistuned instruments, interrupted by cymbal crashes that are forever a millisecond behind the beat. But the flaws are part of the charm." Segal said the album reflects the sheer joy of music appreciation. "To me, it's the sound of people falling in love with music," he said. "It comes as close to capturing that moment when you fall in love with music as anything I've ever heard. It has a kind of chaos and sort of uninformed naiveté about it that's utterly charming."

Some of the students went on to careers in music; others said music had been an important part of their lives ever since.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AFFIRMATION 2002

BCMEA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, February 14-16/02

**Conference Hotel: Renaissance Vancouver Hotel,
1133 W. Hastings Street, Vancouver
\$80/night (single or double)
Reservations: (604) 689-9211, quote "BCM"**

Workshops will include: Orff, Kodaly, Primary, Intermediate, Elementary, Middle School, Recorder, Ukulele, Dance & Movement, Desert Islands, Band, Jazz Band, Choir, Advocacy, Vocal Jazz, MIE, Percussion, Tuba, French Horn, Clarinet, etc.

Experience: Mini-Concerts, 5 Evening Concerts, 6 Honour Ensembles, Lunches, Socials, Displays and more...

Registration forms available at: www.bctf.bc.ca/bcmea

Info: Peter Stigings, Tel. (604) 261-6891; email: stigings@interchange.ubc.ca

B.C. ARTS AND CULTURE WEEK APRIL 21 TO 27, 2002

A week-long celebration of the arts around the province involving the whole spectrum of arts in our lives, and including the arts in the schools and for young people.

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