

*Artists as Teachers in Schools*

**DAVID MYERS, GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY:** *A couple of things occur to me listening to you, Eric. One is that you are working with students who have high levels of musical competence and musical understanding. Another is that this is a developmental process. You have a period of time to help them develop these skills and then for you to be in process with them in classroom situations and give them feedback. And my question is this: in many programs, we're asking artists and classroom teachers to go into schools to accomplish arts integration in ways that are very complex and difficult to attain. Everything that you're doing here is inherent to the musical experience and the artistic experience. Is there a way to translate this to classroom teachers and to artists with whom we have relatively little time to work in professional development contexts?*

**BOOTH:** *People often say, "Oh, this is so cool, I want it in my program, and we have a two-hour workshop on this Friday, can you get the same results?" Obviously you can't get the same results, but I have found that in a number of settings that are much less ideal, there is a positive impact from working in this way. I have found it in teacher-artist partnerships. And in almost every case where I would describe it as a success, it has been over time. It's never been on a one-shot deal. With one shot, you can stir up a little action, but it settles very quickly back into old routines. Even if it's only three half-days over the course of a year, that has a much bigger impact than two days at one point in the year. The work I do with the Empire State Partnership Project is in very real world settings, with serious time and professional development constraints, and yet because the artists and teachers work together on these issues for a number of years, they end up with professional development that is often of the same quality as this Juilliard professional development. And my other answer is that we have to share the best information, even in less than ideal situations—few cases are optimum, but they all deserve the best ideals and aspirations.*

**ARNOLD APRILL, CHICAGO ARTS PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION:** *I think what's needed, in terms of dealing with this issue of having only very short-term professional development, is creating professional communities between teachers. That's what Eric has in his class. It's not just the number of sessions or the hours; they have a professional community. Eric is really a brilliant catalyst, but the energy, as Vincent Marron (Kenan Institute for the Arts) said, comes from the students. And we've got to find ways of making the teachers part of an action research network.*

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**THINK OF THE GREAT TEACHERS IN YOUR OWN LIFE. THEY MAY HAVE BEEN ARTS TEACHERS, THEY MAY HAVE BEEN SCIENCE TEACHERS. I WOULD MAINTAIN IT WAS THE QUALITY OF THE 80% AND THE ARTISTRY OF THEIR TEACHING THAT BOOSTED THE LEARNING. THAT'S OUR BIRTHRIGHT; THAT ARTISTRY IS OUR "ARTS" TURF, EVEN THOUGH WE RARELY CLAIM IT. WE DON'T OWN THAT TURF ALONE, BUT WE INHABIT IT MAGNIFICENTLY, AND IT'S SOMETHING WE CAN BRING INTO SCHOOLS, PARTLY BECAUSE WE COME FROM THE OUTSIDE, WITH EXTRA POWER.**

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## The Artistry of Teaching

**QUESTION:** *Eric, it seems to me that this is really great teaching. In what way is it specifically “art teaching?”*

**BOOTH:** *We’re talking about experiential education. We’re talking about constructivist education. The reason that it happens around the arts so often, I think, is that artistic media tend to reward people in memorable ways, and so we can identify awesomely effective pedagogy. However, I’m often invited to work with people outside the arts, people in business, because these ways of working tend to facilitate really good learning in any subject matter. And when it’s described that the new reason for arts to be in school is art for learning’s sake, this is one of the things we bring, which is a powerful inherent pedagogy. It is artistry in teaching, whatever the subject matter.*

*Think of the great teachers in your own life. They may have been arts teachers, they may have been science teachers. I would maintain it was the quality of the 80% and the artistry of their teaching that boosted the learning. That’s our birthright; that artistry is our “arts” turf, even though we rarely claim it. We don’t own that turf alone, but we inhabit it magnificently, and it’s something we can bring into schools, partly because we come from the outside, with extra power.*

**RICHARD BELL, YOUNG AUDIENCES:** *The 80% principle, the idea that 80% is who you are rather than how you perform, is so foreign to the way most pre-service arts institutions think of training. You ask the typical conservatory student who they are, and they hold up their instrument. ‘That’s how I introduce myself; my instrument is who I am.’ And that reflects the school culture that trained them. So asking them to step into this very different world of the arts in education is a tremendous challenge for them.*

*It seems that this would be so much more successful initially for student musicians who have a natural theatrical sense, if I can put it that way. I’m sure that you’ve encountered many students who don’t have that natural theatrical propensity. Can you talk to us for a moment about some of your experiences with that kind of student?*

**BOOTH:** *Yes, sure. In fact, from my perspective, coming from the theatre, very few of them seem to have what I think of as natural theatrical instincts. But yes, there is a small percentage of them who are naturally dynamic in a classroom. Part of the challenge of the pedagogy is you rely on the action. So you don’t have to be Leonard Bernstein in a classroom in order to get people to engage in musical creating. You just have to be engaging enough to get them to do something, to put some musical ideas and choices together. And then the power of the work itself accommodates what they lack in personal flash and flair. Certainly, it’s great if they’ve got it. And, if*

*they are black holes of the universe as presenters, there’s not much professional development can do to that part of their work. But most of them fall in the middle, neither brilliant nor hopeless, and the actual quality of their work, even with those little peepy voices in an 8th grade classroom, they can actually draw people in to making stuff. So it can work, despite lack of charisma.*

*In my work at Tanglewood, I take these same principles and apply them to concerts for 1200 people at a time. Leonard Bernstein is our biggest nemesis, because everyone comes in thinking you have to be Leonard Bernstein in order to pull off that caper. And the work then becomes figuring out what it is that can actually happen that is not charisma-dependent to be an effective agent of artistic experience with an audience full of people. ¶*



*Roundtable visual: Managing interaction between young students and conservatory musicians is key to the success of music in education programs.*