

The Arts in Higher Education

Series editor Nancy Kindelan Department of Theatre Northeastern University Boston, MA, USA The role the arts play in higher education continues to be a complex and highly debated topic, especially in the changing climate of North American education. Showcasing cutting-edge research, this series illuminates and examines how engagement in the arts helps students meet the challenges and opportunities of a twenty-first century life and workplace by encompassing a wide range of issues from both scholars and practitioners in the arts. Key topics the series will cover include: evolving interdisciplinary degrees that include the arts; creating innovative experiential/pedagogical practices in the arts; discovering new methods of teaching and learning that involve the arts and technology; developing inventive narrative forms that explore social issues through play making; exploring non-traditional sites for creative art making; demystifying the process of creative thinking (especially as creativity relates to business practices, scientific thought, inter-active media, and entrepreneurial activities); engaging the arts in understanding global perspectives; and illustrating how the arts create lifelong skills that help students manage a challenging job market. While the scope of the series is focused on the arts in higher education in North America, the series may also include scholarship that considers the total educational spectrum from K through 16, since there is now interest in creating a seamless educational progression from kindergarten through the baccalaureate degree.

More information about this series at http://www.palgrave.com/gp/series/14452

Nancy H. Hensel Editor

Exploring, Experiencing, and Envisioning Integration in US Arts Education

palgrave macmillan Editor
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Introduction and Overview

Nancy H. Hensel

The arts and liberal arts are at a crossroad. Many people question the value of the arts and liberal arts in preparing young people for their future careers. "What kind of career is possible with a history or English literature degree?" skeptics ask. Such questions entered the political arena in 2013 when Patrick McCrory, newly elected Governor of North Carolina, said that he wanted to base funding for public universities on post-graduation employment rather than enrollment. Kentucky's governor, Matt Bevin, also made similar statements in 2015. Rick Scott, Governor of Florida, suggested in 2015 that taxpayers should not foot the education bill for majors that have limited job prospects. Students, the governor said, should be encouraged to study science, technology, engineering, or math.² President Obama once commented, while promoting job training, that "a lot of young people no longer see the trades and skilled manufacturing as a viable career. But I promise you, folks can make a lot more, potentially, with skilled manufacturing or the trades than they might with an art history degree." And the arts fare no better. When a funding crisis hits public elementary and secondary schools, the arts are typically the first programs to be eliminated. Colleges and universities may soon follow the same path.

New American Colleges and Universities, Laguna Woods, CA, USA

N. H. Hensel (\boxtimes)

Declining enrollments in some arts and humanities courses mean administrators are under pressure to either close or down-size departments, causing institutions to review and rank programs for possible closure. A recent Hechinger Report said that Indiana State University, as part of a comprehensive review, eliminated or suspended 48 academic programs. Art and history were two of those programs. In a major budget cut, the University of Southern Maine cut French, despite a significant Franco-American population in the state, and combined its English, philosophy, and history departments. Music, art, and theater were also combined. The University of Alaska Anchorage has considered either reducing or eliminating music instruction.

Why is there so little economic, cultural, and intellectual value placed on the arts in the United States? Perhaps it is because they are so little understood. The perception is that graduates find it difficult, as President Obama suggested, to earn a good living with a liberal arts or arts degree. A recent report from the Association of American Colleges & Universities and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems found, however, that liberal arts majors close the earnings gap by the time they reach the peak earnings ages, have low unemployment rates that decline over time, and disproportionately pursue social services professions. 6 The Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) reports that for "arts graduates 92% of those who wish to work currently are, with most (81%) finding employment soon after graduating. Two-thirds said their first job was a close match for the kind of work they wanted." The report quotes Steven Tepper, formerly associate director of the Curb Center at Vanderbilt University and senior SNAAP scholar, as saying, "Artistic careers exemplify new ways of working in the growing contingent economy, and the experiences of artists might increasingly become the norm for many 21st century workers." He further indicates that arts alumni have high rates of self-employment.

We can demonstrate statistically that students majoring in the liberal arts and arts can develop successful and remunerative careers; however, questions still arise about what role the arts and liberal arts should play in a student's education. Do the liberal arts and arts contribute to professional development? What do students learn from the liberal arts and the arts that will prepare them for a future career? Do the liberal arts and arts benefit students regardless of the career path they choose?

THE IMPACT OF ARTS ON INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Cognitive psychologists have described the ways in which the arts contribute to the education of young children and to the intellectual development of college students and adults. Business leaders and scientists have also commented on the importance of the arts in the development of human potential and professional skills.⁸

The National Endowment for the Arts published a white paper in March 2011 that examined the role of the arts in early childhood, adolescent, and adult older development. The report said that many studies had found that arts participation and arts education are associated with improved cognitive, social, and behavioral outcomes in individuals across their lifespan—in early childhood, in adolescence and young adulthood, and in later years.

Developmental psychologist Howard Gardner is noted for his early study, published in 1973, on the artistic development of young children as a means to understand their cognitive development. 10 He discovered that young children display significant aesthetic development as well as cognitive development and suggested that the concepts of making, perceiving, and feeling are of great importance in the developmental process. As Gardner continued to study cognitive development, he came to believe that there are different kinds of intelligences and different ways in which children learn. Initially, in 1983, he described five kinds of intelligence: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, bodily kinesthetic, and personal. 11 It should be noted that three of the five intelligences relate directly to the arts—writing, music, and dance. More recently Gardner has thought about what kind of minds or mindsets people will need in the future. In his 2008 book, Five Minds for the Future, Gardner talks about disciplined, synthesizing, creative, respectful, and ethical minds. 12 Gardner believes that it will be important for people to develop at least one way of thinking that relates to a specific discipline, skill, or profession.

Best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell has summarized the research concerning the amount of time it takes to become an expert in a given area, finding that it may take about 10,000 hours or ten years to achieve mastery. Thus a disciplined mind is one that can focus on a subject over an extended period of time. Our information age requires that people take information from an increasingly wide array of sources, objectively evaluate the sources, and then synthesize the information. Gladwell himself is a master at synthesizing, bringing together large amounts of information

and developing a new interpretation or describing a previously unobserved trend. Creativity builds on discipline and synthesis to develop new and innovative ideas, solutions, or products. Creativity is necessary to maintain a vibrant economy as well as a responsive and stimulating cultural environment. In a fast changing and increasingly diverse environment, a respectful mind is also critical. Many educators and business people talk about the need for cultural understanding and appreciation of the diversity of our society. Respect is the foundation for understanding the beliefs and mores of cultures different from our own. Howard Gardner suggests that the ethical mind asks, "What is my role as a responsible citizen, worker, or friend?" The person with an ethical mindset looks beyond self-interest and seeks to take into consideration the impact of his or her actions on others.

Daniel Pink, in 2005, conceptualized the successful mind of the future somewhat differently than does Gardner. In *A Whole New Mind* he suggests that in the future the right brain that is associated with emotion, creativity, and intuitiveness will be increasingly more important. He further suggests that we are moving from an information age to a conceptual age. Many professionals, including lawyers, engineers, and accountants, rely on specific knowledge, while artists, counselors, and inventors rely on creativity and sensitivity to be successful. We need both ways of thinking for a healthy society and economy. We are tilting toward, if not relying more on, conceptual approaches to engendering progress, at least recognizing the need for both conceptual thinking and specific knowledge. The new economy that Pink envisions relies on six senses or attributes: design, story, symphony, empathy, play, and meaning. As the American economy has become more able to meet basic human needs, Pink suggests we will think more about design rather than basic functioning.

The emphasis that Steve Jobs placed on all aspects of design, from the computer or phone to its packaging, is a good example of the significance of design. "Style" sections of many newspapers often showcase functional items such as toasters or mixing bowls with designs that go beyond mere functionality. In the conceptual age, stories will become increasingly important. While we have a great deal of information that can be used to try to persuade people to adopt our ideas, we also need stories that help people understand problems and their possible solutions. Stories appeal to the emotions and can assist people in remembering the key points of a new approach. Knowledge has become increasingly specialized; solving our most pressing problems requires collaboration across disciplines. The ability to synthesize and also to collaborate are essential skills, and that is what Pink calls symphony. Problems cannot be solved by only looking at

data; problem solving also requires the ability to see different perspectives and to understand feelings. Pink calls this ability empathy. Children and adults develop empathy, problem-solving skills, and creativity through play. Innovators in Silicon Valley understand the role of play in developing new technologies, and play is also important in other areas of innovation. Finally, Pink suggests that as people have attained material comforts, many now seek a meaningful life through purposeful work, volunteer activity, or spiritual fulfillment. It is important to acknowledge the impact the arts play in intellectual and social development as we think about how undergraduate education contributes to social, cultural, and economic development.

Psychologists, educators, and business leaders continue to think about the kinds of minds that will be needed for the future. A recent report by the Brookings Institute, Skills for a Changing World: Advancing Quality Learning for Vibrant Societies, suggests that mastering content knowledge will no longer ensure professional success. 15 The report suggests that in addition to the academic skills of literacy, numeracy and sciences the skills of teamwork, critical thinking, communication, persistence, and creativity are also needed. 16 Geoff Colvin, senior editor-at-large for Fortune and author of Humans are Underrated: What High Achievers Know that Brilliant Machines Never Will, suggests that the skills of empathy, collaborating, and creating are essential skills for the future.¹⁷ Data literacy, technology literacy, and human literacy are the new literacies that Joseph E. Aoun, President of Northeastern University, sees as important for jobs of the future. 18 Aoun elaborates on cognitive capacities to include systems thinking, entrepreneurship, cultural agility, and critical thinking. Systems thinking is the ability to look at things in a holistic, connected, and integrated way. Entrepreneurship involves a creative mindset that is manifested though economic activities. Cultural agility is a necessary skill for living and working in a complex and diverse world. The work of these thought leaders provides additional support for the kinds of skills needed for the future that can be developed through engagement in the arts.

THE IMPACT OF ARTS AND LIBERAL ARTS ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In Defense of Liberal Education, Fareed Zakaria, editor-at-large of Time magazine and host of a CNN Sunday news program, discusses how the liberal arts teach students to write clearly and to think analytically and creatively. Zakaria's views of what contributes to professional development closely match the list of "Top Ten Things Employers Look for in New

College Graduates" that resulted from AAC&U's collaborative survey with Peter D. Hart Research Associates. ¹⁹ The Hart survey found that employers want college graduates who can work in teams, write and speak well, apply creativity and innovation in solving problems, apply knowledge and skills to new settings, think clearly about complex problems, and analyze a problem to develop workable solutions. These are some of the same skills that Louis E. Catron, the late professor of theater at William and Mary College, described when he wrote about the benefits of a theater major. He describes a discussion with business leaders in which a CEO told the group that "she liked to hire theater majors because they are energetic, enthusiastic, and able to work under pressure." ²⁰

Students who major in theater and the other arts combine the broad intellectual aspects of a liberal arts degree with hands-on learning. The theater student, for example, needs to study history to understand the context of a particular play. Costume designers need to know what people were wearing during the period of the play and what their clothes might indicate about the character's status. Set designers need to know about the architecture and interior design of the period. Theater and other arts majors and professionals involve many disciplines in their work. Music and theater majors learn to work collaboratively and to value the contribution of each individual to the completed project. Successful managers in any field understand the importance of collaboration and recognition of individual contributions. Students who study any of the arts also develop the ability to work independently. Actors need to memorize and practice their lines. Visual artists and writers typically work on their own without supervision, an important ability in any profession. All artists learn to deal with disappointment and how to bounce back when a short story is not published or a role goes to someone else. Artists also understand that every performance, painting, or story carries with it the risk of rejection. Understanding the possibility of rejection means that arts students must have a high level of commitment and motivation to the project. Employers will value the traits of commitment and motivation. In an age of constant distraction, employers will also value the ability of actors, who must imagine themselves to be someone else, to maintain the intense concentration and focus needed to stay in character. Concentration and focus are valuable skills in any career.

The workplace of the future and the new economy will need people with the mindsets described earlier by Pink and Gardner. A competitive global economy needs people who are intellectually nimble, can integrate

ideas from more than one discipline, are attuned to seeing patterns and relationships, use these skills to make meaning of what they know, and are able to apply their knowledge to solve the challenges of the day. The arts develop these skills beginning in early childhood education and extending through professional development.

THE IMPACT OF THE ARTS ON SOCIETY

What would our society be like without the arts? It is difficult to imagine that because the arts influence our lives in so many ways. Music is, perhaps, the art that has played the most prominent role in our daily lives and has had the most powerful impact on our society. Nations use song to celebrate pride in their country. Weddings, funerals, graduations, and church services use music to celebrate the occasions and inspire the attendees. Even our national pastime, baseball, includes music as a traditional part of the game when fans sing "Take Me Out To the Ballgame" at the seventh inning stretch. Music brings people together to share joy, provide comfort, and challenge the inequities in society. "Amazing Grace," written in 1773 by a former English slave trader, has become a powerful African American spiritual calling for forgiveness and reconciliation. When Barack Obama sang "Amazing Grace" during the eulogy for Rev. Clementa Pinckney, who was killed in a shooting at a Charleston church, he provided comfort and hope not only for the congregation at the memorial service but also for many across the country.

American history can be documented through song starting with "Yankee Doodle" during the Revolutionary War. "Over There" was an inspirational World War I song, and Irving Berlin's "God Bless America" celebrated pride in our country during World War II (WWII). "I'll Be Seeing You" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas," also WWII songs, suggested hope that soldiers would return home from the war. Both are still popular today. War protesters used music to convey their message and to rally people to the cause. Pete Seeger's "Where Have All the Flowers Gone" and Bob Dylan's "With God on Our Side" were part of the protests against the Vietnam War, and John Lennon urged the world to "Give Peace a Chance" in his 1969 song.

Slave songs like "Wade in the Water" had hidden codes to guide slaves to freedom. Other songs helped them endure hard work in the fields and their harsh living conditions. Music also played an important role in the labor and civil rights movements. People still sing today "Take This Hammer"

and "John Henry," songs that were symbols of the labor movement and union organization. "We Shall Overcome," the anthem of the civil rights movement, continues to stir people to action in their fight for justice.

Theater and film provide a mirror to society that can help us understand others, our times, and ourselves. The film "Philadelphia" for example, changed the national conversation about HIV/AIDS. It provided not only knowledge about AIDS but also helped people to see the human side of the disease with more compassion. Arthur Miller's play, *Death of a Salesman*, is a critique of the American capitalist system and its failure for many Americans. Unemployed or underemployed workers can identify with the economic insecurity and hopelessness that Willy Loman experienced. Indeed, on seeing the play many people see themselves in Willy Loman, and the play touched an emotional chord in everyone who saw it. Henrik Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House*, which he called a "humanist" play, nevertheless, shed light on the circumscribed role of women and their desire for individual freedom and the right to live a full life.

Explicit protest has always had a place in theater. During the 1960's several protest theater groups developed, and at least two continue to perform. Today El Teatro Campesino, founded around the same time that Cesar Chavez was organizing farm workers in California, has a mission of presenting a "more just and accurate account of human history." The San Francisco Mime Troupe, in a commedia dell'arte style, produces socially relevant theater on contemporary issues. Sometimes theater can serve as a healing process for painful events. This was the case of the *Laramie Project*, a play that was based on interviews with residents of Laramie, Wyoming, where a young gay man, Andrew Shepherd, had been brutally murdered. Theater can also serve as an agent of communication and healing in small groups. Role playing in contentious situations can develop mutual understanding and help to resolve conflicts.

The visual arts also make significant social contributions. The creation of community arts projects, such as murals on freeway walls or other outdoor structures, can be a way of helping communities to share their visions, ideals, and hopes for the future. Community art can also build cohesiveness. Many non-profit groups, such as the Iraqi American Reconciliation Project, share art from the communities they serve or are advocating for as a way of building understanding across groups and cultures. Art can also communicate to a world audience various common emotions and thoughts. Picasso's *Guernica*, a 1937 painting that responded to the deliberate targeting of civilians by a military force, is one example. *Guernica* was a powerful political

statement of the destruction and tragedies of war. Tapping into the anxieties that many people feel, Edvard Munch portrayed his inner feelings of anxiety in *The Scream*. The painting has become an iconic symbol of such feelings for the whole world. The visual and performing arts have sometimes changed the course of history, brought people together through shared experiences to increase understanding and compassion for social issues and events. In all these ways, the arts are important to our society and need to be included in the undergraduate college experience.

Exploring the Arts: Interdisciplinarity, Professional Skills, and Community

This collection of essays suggests that the combination of liberal arts and arts provides the type of education needed for success, in work and life, for today's students. Our purpose is to provide practical examples of how the arts can be integrated into the undergraduate curriculum and list the benefits this integration can provide to student development. We have divided the essays into three thematic sections: interdisciplinarity, professional skills, and community. Nearly every essay describes programs that are interdisciplinary to some degree; however, the essays by Young, Sooter, Pane, Tomasik, and Laudien specifically address interdisciplinarity. Gregory Young provides examples of interdisciplinary courses he taught with a colleague that integrated music and architecture, music and the economy, and music and the brain.

Drury University Professor Traci Sooter engaged students from multiple disciplines in a creative project that addressed a significant community issue. Students from architecture, art history, nursing, communications, and 18 other disciplines collaborated to build a solar-energy home that was designed to withstand the debris cloud and wind pressure of a tornado. The project is an excellent example of how campuses can integrate the liberal arts, arts, professional studies, and civic engagement to address a compelling community issue.

Steven Pane discusses how learning from music can deepen the reading and writing experience for non-majors. At Valparaiso University film students study the critical and production sides of film, an art form that utilizes images and sounds. Timothy Tomasik suggests that the approach encourages experiential learning through practical application, engaging students in topical discussions about the modern world using traditional liberal arts critical inquiry. At Manhattan College students have opportunities

to study children's literature, thought and motion through dance, religion and performance art in Italy, theater and the city, and music and culture.

The liberal arts develop many of the skills that employers look for, such as the ability to think clearly about complex problems; to write and speak well; analyze a problem to develop solutions; apply knowledge in new settings; understand numbers, statistics, technology and science; and a sense of ethics and integrity. These are all important skills for success in work; however, they leave out other important skills such as the ability to see the perspective of the other, compassion, and comfort with risk and critical evaluation. These latter skills are more likely to be developed through the arts. The authors in this volume believe that the development of professional skills in combination with the theoretical aspects of a liberal arts curriculum, which traditionally includes music, theater, art and creative writing, provides a high-quality undergraduate educational experience that uniquely prepares students for adaptability in their careers and engaged citizenship grounded in their abilities to think creatively, critically, and ethically.

Ilene Lieberman and Mara Parker expand on how the arts can prepare students for the workplace. They suggest that when students take arts courses they develop new ways of thinking, communicating, and evaluating. They also may develop a more compassionate understanding of human nature; this is especially important in contemporary society, as we must develop comfort with the unknown, whether it is a different culture, religion, or unfamiliar idea. The arts open up new ways of taking in information, analyzing it, and finally communicating it.

Kevin Marshal, Michael O'Connor, Placido Gomez and Sean Dillon collaborate on theater studies and law because they see a commonality between the theater and the drama in a courtroom. The authors examine theatrical theories and practices that are relevant to communicating facts and influencing perceptions, analyze the parts of a jury trial that relate to theater arts, and demonstrate the value of the cross-disciplinary study. They propose an integrated course model that involves theater and law. The authors conclude that the integration of theater and law, for graduate and undergraduate students, prepares students for success in their careers as well as engaged citizenship.

Mary Rist and Sasha West describe a collaborative writing program that includes creative-writing students and professional-writing students. Rist and West suggest that creative-writing students learn editing, digital media skills, and rhetorical history, while professional-writing students learn creative approaches to their writing and benefit from the critique in a writing workshop.

Jennifer Blackmer discusses how the arts contribute to entrepreneurial learning and thinking as a way of developing the "soft skills" necessary for a successful career in any field. She argues that entrepreneurship is inherent in the arts as artists think creatively, work collaboratively, embrace risk, and connect to the broader world. She offers examples of how studentdriven experiences can be designed to develop the abilities to adapt, integrate knowledge, act with ethical responsibility, and communicate effectively. The soft skills mentioned by Blackmer are developed when the arts and the community interact around local culture and significant local or national events. Linda Ferguson suggests that music serves as a community transaction and has often provided inspiration and solace in times of national crisis. Adriane Thompson-Bradshaw describes how participation in a gospel choir brought African American and white students together at Ohio Northern University. The Gospel Ensemble offered opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue that eventually developed a deeper appreciation for others. Wagner College has a long and successful history of community engagement, particularly in a community university arts program. Sara Scott and Samantha Siegel present two case studies based on their community work in the arts. The first case study was the development of a community mural, and the second study involved students and the community in theater projects about the history and culture of the local area. The authors suggest that both projects had a positive impact on the campus and community climate.

The development of a person's fullest capacity is most likely to occur through the integration of liberal arts and the arts in an undergraduate education. This is the case we hope to make in this series of chapters.

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