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Powerful Arts Education Practice

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TEN DIMENSIONS OF POWERFUL ARTS EDUCATION PRACTICE

1. Creativity and Craft
2. Self-Discovery and Healing
3. Voice and Storytelling
4. Collaboration and Mutual Learning
5. Holding Space
6. Belonging
7. Social Justice
8. Cultivating Leadership
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Powerful Arts Education Practice was developed by Lauren Stevenson and Sarah Crowell with funding from the Hewlett Foundation. Stevenson and Crowell led a working group of arts education experts and conducted a series of interviews with a wider set of leaders in the field in order to develop the ten dimensions of powerful arts education practice identified in the report. The Hewlett Foundation is grateful to Stevenson, Crowell and all of the youth and educators who gave so generously of their time and expertise throughout the process.

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation is a nonpartisan, private charitable foundation that advances ideas and supports institutions to promote a better world. For more than 50 years, the foundation has supported efforts to advance education for all, preserve the environment, support vibrant performing arts, strengthen Bay Area communities, make the philanthropy sector more effective, and foster gender equity and responsive governance around the world.



Powerful Arts Education Practice

i. Introduction

“Arts education is a means in which people are humanizing education. It’s a means in which people are making humanity and self and heart and collaboration and love, the center of education.”

– SUKARI WRIGHT, RYSE CENTER

When we create art, we bring ourselves to it. We combine our lived experience, culture, emotions, imagination, and skills with the techniques, materials, and cultural and historical legacy of an art form. Creative expression requires a dynamic interplay between creator and art form. It's about connection — connection to an art form; connection to ourselves; connection to the world around us; and connection to others, to collaborators and audience. Powerful arts education programs not only teach the craft of an art form, they nurture these connections. They support young people in exploring — individually and collectively — who they are, how they shape and are shaped by the world around them, how they relate to others, and what they want to express through their art.

Powerful arts education programs create the contexts and conditions for young people to bring their full selves to the creative process. They help young people develop their voice and the skills and confidence to express themselves and make an impact with their creativity. They elevate young people's leadership and amplify their voices and impact. They embody a deep care for young people in all facets of their practice.

This kind of arts education practice can be particularly potent for young people because they are in a concentrated period of exploration and self-discovery — from young children developing their initial understanding of the world, to older youth developing their sense of self in relationship to that world. The arts help young people feel, understand, and illuminate things as they are and imagine and communicate how they and the world could be different. Powerful arts education programs honor and celebrate young people as creators of art, self, and the world in which they want to live.

RECOGNIZING POWERFUL ARTS EDUCATION PRACTICE

This kind of powerful arts education practice is itself an art. It is a sophisticated practice most often seen at organizations that are deeply rooted in communities. This includes arts organizations that offer arts education programs as a dimension of a broader mission, as well as, and most often, community-based arts education organizations that work exclusively with young people.¹ These organizations deliver their programs in community settings, as well as at, and through partnerships with, public youth-serving institutions like schools and juvenile carceral facilities. Many offer programs for young people from preschool all the way through the early 20s, while others focus on the younger or older ends of this range.

This document describes 10 dimensions of powerful arts education practice — building blocks for organizations that engage young people in this practice. It also shares examples of the kinds of things you might see and feel at an organization — indicators — that could let you know these dimensions are at play.

A working group of arts education leaders illuminated these dimensions and indicators through a collaborative process co-facilitated by Sarah Crowell, an expert practitioner, and Lauren Stevenson, a researcher. Stevenson synthesized the group's insights and elaborated emerging dimensions and indicators through interviews with additional arts education leaders and iterative feedback from the working group. Working group members and interviewees included youth participants, youth mentors, young alumni, teaching artists, program managers, and artistic and executive directors at organizations known for powerful arts education practice. The following dimensions and indicators reflect their collective wisdom.

¹ Arts education organizations that support positive youth development and creative development, and guide their work with values for youth leadership, social justice, and collective impact, may be referred to as Creative Youth Development organizations. See, for example, the Creative Youth Development National Partnership, "[What is Creative Youth Development?](#)"

The Hewlett Foundation’s Performing Arts Program supported this process because of its belief in the importance of powerful arts education programs for young people and communities.² Its goal for the project was twofold: (a) to support arts education leaders in describing this kind of practice in its own terms and illuminating its power for young people, communities, and education, and (b) to equip its own staff to better recognize and support such practice.

Where the following descriptions of the dimensions and indicators name things that organizations do in their practice, “organization” refers to the whole entity, inclusive of young people and adults, and not only to what adult staff do for youth. Young people’s experience, leadership, and agency as creators shapes the contexts and conditions for learning and artmaking at these organizations, in dynamic combination with the experience and expertise of adult staff.

These dimensions and indicators are interrelated and come together in different ways in different contexts and communities. They are not intended to be used as a recipe or checklist, but rather an inspirational jumping off point for seeing, learning, and building understanding.

² The type of arts education practice described here aligns with the Hewlett Foundation [Performing Arts Program Strategic Framework 2020](#), which is guided by values for the expansive power of the arts, community self-determination, and equity and justice.

ii. Ten Dimensions of Powerful Arts Education Practice

1. CREATIVITY AND CRAFT

“Organizations introduce young people to artists — what they think about and how they work — so they have a model to learn from and understand what it looks like in practice.”

– MARIAH RANKINE-LANDERS, STUDIO PATHWAYS

“We make sure young people have quality training, equipment, and software so they’re competitive in the enterprise of arts, media, and entertainment.”

– TAMAIRA “MISS TEE” SANDIFER, STUDIO T ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

1. CREATIVITY AND CRAFT

Powerful arts education organizations center young people as creators. They support and equip them to create art and to build their creative capacity, deepening their understanding and awareness of the creative process and developing their creative skills. Teaching artists serve as the core educators and mentors at these organizations and model how artists think, work, and engage with the world.³

These organizations help young people build their expertise in particular art forms in the context of a creative process that is driven by youth and their vision of what they want to create and express. Teaching artists help them develop necessary skills, techniques, and knowledge and ensure that young people have access to quality art materials and equipment. For those who are interested in learning art forms at advanced levels, organizations provide pathways that extend into pre-professional and professional training.

What you might see or feel:

- Professional, practicing artists teaching young people the skills, craft, and historical and cultural context of specific art forms.
- Explicit attention to and naming of artists' ways of thinking — e.g., [Studio Habits of Mind](#).
- Ongoing, dynamic individual and group reflection on artistic processes and products.
- Young people spending significant time creating art in rehearsal and studio settings, and sharing their work with public audiences.
- Young people using high-quality equipment, materials, and software.
- Pathways to pre-professional and professional work — including advanced performance companies or studio groups, apprenticeships with the organization or its partners, and entrepreneurial practices in which young people create work for paying clients.
- Formalized support for applying and transitioning to college.
- High energy and a buzz of activity, with people talking to one another, asking questions, and sharing ideas.
- Spontaneous outbursts of celebration in response to creative breakthroughs and sparks of inspiration.

³ "A teaching artist, by definition, is a two-career professional: a working artist and a working educator," according to the [Teaching Artist Guild](#)

2. SELF-DISCOVERY AND HEALING

“Why art is so important to my community is to express rage. I get to express myself and let go of a lot of those feelings through art, and there’s so many people that feel like they don’t have that outlet.”

– SUKARI WRIGHT, RYSE CENTER

“Engagement in the creative process is a rehearsal for a healthy life. When young people are denied the opportunity to create, it’s hard for them to break out of the boxes in which others have placed them. Creative practice, in which young people are provided the opportunity to imagine something different and to try on different possibilities for themselves, changes the human organism in positive ways so that later, when they are faced with a challenging situation, they have a range of possible solutions from which they can draw from.”

– KAREN ALTREE PIEMME, RED LADDER THEATRE COMPANY

2. SELF-DISCOVERY AND HEALING

As much as young people are creating art in these organizations, they are also creating themselves. As they are figuring out what they want to express through their art, they are exploring who they are and shaping their identities. Organizations intentionally help young people use creative practice, process, and form as a medium for this exploration. They help young people imagine and practice new possibilities for themselves and develop confidence in who they are.

Organizations understand that young people experience trauma and require healing — particularly young people who are systematically marginalized because of their race, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, age, or economic or family circumstance. Organizations engage creative expression as a way to heal trauma, process and release emotions, and tap into joy. They welcome and validate young people's lived experiences as part of who they are as creators, people, and members of their community, and they help young people develop social and emotional skills through the practice of creating art in a group context.

What you might see or feel:

- Young people expressing their emotions and life experiences through their artwork.
- Young people reaching out to teaching artist mentors for support around emotional and general well-being.
- Young people empathizing with one another around shared traumas, while lifting their own and other's spirits through the joy of creating art.
- Staff receiving professional development around healing-centered or trauma-informed care, and articulating how their pedagogy supports social and emotional learning.
- Staff checking in with young people who are experiencing a difficult or traumatic situation and connecting them to supports and resources they may need.
- Staff who are doing their own work on their own mental and emotional well-being as part of their development as artists and mentors.

3. VOICE AND STORYTELLING

“Voice, story, tapping a young person’s own creative potential — I think that’s at the heart of it. Being able to tell one’s own story and be heard is really important.”

– TARA DORABJI, CENTER FOR CULTURAL POWER

“One could imagine art as this thing that’s going on where we’re trying to translate that internal feeling — the love, the grieving, the rage, the celebration, the perception — and connect what is inside with what is outside.”

– JORDAN SIMMONS, EAST BAY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

3. VOICE AND STORYTELLING

Creative products are as important at these organizations as creative process. The works of art that young people create are vehicles for them to express who they are and to be seen and heard within the organization and the larger community. Through their artwork, young people tell their stories and strengthen and build confidence in their voice — in what they want to say and how to say it. As storytellers, they develop agency and power to shape culture and change how people see them and their communities.

Organizations uplift and amplify young people’s voices through performances, exhibitions, books, videos, and other media that enable them to share their work with public audiences. The experience of being seen and heard reinforces development and healing.

What you might see or feel:

- Youth and teaching artists leaning in to listen deeply to one another’s stories and provide feedback on works in progress.
- Playful, chaotic bouts of crosstalk in between moments of deep listening, with lots of laughter and sometimes tears.
- Small groups of young people creating work together and then sharing it with the larger group.
- Exhibitions, performances, books, media, and other culminating projects that present young people’s work to public audiences.
- Young people accessing technology needed to share their stories and artwork digitally, and reach national and global audiences.
- Communications, social media, and distribution strategies that amplify young people’s voices.

4. COLLABORATION AND MUTUAL LEARNING

“Collaboration helps people feel connected. Without collaboration, the art doesn’t work the same.”

– SUKARI WRIGHT, RYSE CENTER

“Good mentorship is a mutual push. It’s a back and forth. I think the willingness to have that back and forth is the critical thing – that you’re going to admit when you’re wrong on both sides. It’s a deep learning process.”

– MIKO LEE, TEACHING ARTISTS GUILD

4. COLLABORATION AND MUTUAL LEARNING

At these organizations, as much as young people share their own stories, they are an audience for their peers and connect through that reciprocity. They experience the intersectionality of their lived experiences and learn from one another's stories and growth as artists and people. They also collaborate to create works of art together — from eight-counts of choreography and group poems to theatrical productions, concerts, and murals. These collaborations demand connection and interdependence, which builds strong relationships among participants and provides an opportunity for young people to inspire and push one another in their creative development.

Youth and teaching artists at the organizations are also collaborators, and mentorship is oriented around mutual learning. Teaching artists not only share their expertise with young people, they facilitate opportunities for young people to share and build on their own experience and expertise. Teaching artists learn from young people in ways that help them grow as educators and artists.

Organizations also share their expertise with their communities and draw on the expertise of community members to support youth and staff. Staff build relationships with the caregivers in young people's lives. They collaborate with caregivers to support young people, and at the same time recognize that young people need space from caregivers to develop their own voice. They provide a space to explore generative tensions between what young people, caregivers, educators, and the larger community want.

What you might or and feel:

- Ice breaker activities that help young people get to know each other.
- The energy of collaboration — people sharing ideas, building off each other, finishing each other's sentences, figuring things out together.
- Small collaborations that serve as practice for bigger ones.
- Teaching artists talking about mentorship as an exchange, and reflecting on what they've learned from young people.
- Specialists in a community — for example culture bearers and business leaders — serving as guest teachers and advisors.
- Youth sharing their expertise with community members — e.g., giving their perspectives on community issues or providing creative services to local businesses.
- Young people developing bonds with one another and with mentors that endure beyond a program and often last a lifetime.

5. HOLDING SPACE

“It’s important to give youth space to create and to set up the space — the atmosphere we’re in — to make youth feel safe to share what’s deep inside, to build bonds.”

– SUKARI WRIGHT, RYSE CENTER

“Teachers alter/altar the space with arts practice. They support the mind space for creativity, as well as the physical space.”

– MARIAH RANKINE-LANDERS, STUDIO PATHWAYS

5. HOLDING SPACE

Creative practice, self-discovery, self-expression, connection, and collaboration all require risk. Organizations create a space that supports young people to take these risks. More than just a physical space, it is an emotional and mental space in which young people can bring their full selves. Organizations actively “hold space” for young people — using rituals, relationships, and agreements to mark the space so that young people know and feel that it is there, that it is safe, and that the group has a container for its creative, social, and emotional work. In this space, young people build trust that others are there for them and that they can let out their emotions and voice their ideas.

At organizations where teaching artists work in schools and partner with classroom teachers to deliver arts-integrated instruction — teaching the arts in tandem with other academic subjects, like language arts or science — they bring this transformative space to classrooms. They help classroom teachers learn how to engage the arts to help students bring their full selves into the classroom and shift what is possible for relationships and learning.

What you might see or feel:

- Common practices or rituals that begin and end activities and open and close the space.
- Groups regularly coming together in a circle where everyone is seen and equal.
- Consistently communicated and upheld community agreements that establish how group members will act and treat one another.
- Small-group work where young people practice creative risk-taking and test the space and community agreements before working as a full group.
- Teaching artists having one-on-one conversations with young people and taking time to build trust before asking them to produce something.
- Young people readily asking for what they need and sharing honestly about what’s going on for them.

6. BELONGING

“The habits of art — when they are taught and encouraged — allow us to be in unity, to find our way together.”

– TANDY BEAL, TANDY BEAL & COMPANY

“There is something about being able to creatively express an experience of reality that builds an atmosphere of safety and commonality that, in many ways, really binds a group together.”

– KAREN ALTREE PIEMME, RED LADDER THEATRE COMPANY

6. BELONGING

Organizations foster belonging. They honor young people’s lived experiences and cultures and help them feel welcomed, seen, and included.⁴ They are aware of the impacts of power dynamics and systems and structures of oppression, and they center voices that are often marginalized. They help young people feel like they can be themselves, while at the same time building a unifying bond as creators — a bond that helps them bridge across their differences, find the intersections in their lived experience, and weather disagreements.

At organizations that focus on transmitting specific cultural forms, belonging is also cultivated as teaching artists place the forms in their historical and cultural context and strengthen young people’s connection to their cultural community and lineage.

What you might see or feel:

- A culture of welcome when you enter the organization.
- Young people learning art forms that are relevant to their cultural backgrounds.
- Young people learning art forms from cultures different from their own in a respectful environment.
- Teaching artists who reflect participants’ cultural backgrounds and lived experiences.
- Teaching artists honoring the legacy of the art forms they are teaching by positioning them in cultural and historical context.
- Staff and youth paying attention to speaking order, for example, inviting younger voices and BIPOC voices to speak first.
- Conflicts being resolved through restorative justice practices.
- Space for families and caregivers to connect, learn, and share their expertise.
- Programs that are free or use a sliding scale for tuition; trust placed in community members to select their own tuition level without documentation of their income; no one turned away for lack of funds.

⁴ “Belongingness entails an unwavering commitment to not simply tolerating and respecting difference but to ensuring that all people are welcome and feel that they belong in the society.” From [“The Problem of Othering: Towards Inclusiveness and Belonging,”](#) by John A. Powell and Stephen Menéndez, p. 32.

7. SOCIAL JUSTICE

*“We make art to reimagine the world
and deconstruct systems that don’t work
for everyone.”*

– SARAH CROWELL, DESTINY ARTS CENTER

*“We change the storytellers to change
the world.”*

– VILLY WANG, BAYCAT

7. SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice is part of the fabric of these organizations. The way the organizations intentionally foster belonging and supplant experiences of marginalization and disempowerment with experiences of belonging and agency, is social justice work.⁵ The way the organizations hold space for youth to grow, heal, and create in the context of systems of oppression that would deprive them of that space, is social justice work. The way organizations nurture and amplify the voices and creativity of young people who have been marginalized or silenced because of their race, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, age, or economic or family circumstance, is social justice work.

At these organizations, young people are learning about their own and one another's cultures and lived experiences. They are imagining and practicing new possibilities for how people can relate to one another across their differences, and equipping themselves to move these possibilities out into the world — through creative expression and by embodying them in their relationships with others.⁶ They are dismantling social structures that keep people separate. They are countering and shifting systems of oppression that prevent young people from being whole, connected, and heard. This is social justice work.

What you might see or feel:

- Young people creating artwork that articulates a vision of what the world looks and feels like, with and without oppression.
- A racial equity framework created by the organization with its community that is not just a document, but a living practice.
- A theory of liberation that guides the organization's practice — for example, [RYSE Theory of Liberation](#).
- Staff continually evolving organizational structures and practices to align with deepening commitments to racial equity and social justice.
- Curriculum and training for youth and staff around SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression) and anti-racism.
- Organizations and their partners working to distribute young people's creative work, and change systems and institutions that often exclude their creative expression, particularly young BIPOC and LGBTQ creators, deeming it, for example, too niche or political.
- Teaching artists and youth calling attention to and magnifying moments where someone makes a "social justice move" — e.g., taking an action that fosters belonging, like making sure everyone is included in the line before leading a bow at the end of a performance.

⁵ For more on arts, culture, belonging, and change, see Evan Bissell's 2016 article, "[Notes on a Cultural Strategy for Belonging](#)."

⁶ This practice resonates with cultural strategy, "a field of practice that centers artists, storytellers, media makers and cultural influencers as agents of social change," according to "[A Conversation about Cultural Strategy](#)," by Jeff Chang, Liz Manne, and Erin Potts. See also, the Culture Group's "[Making Waves: A Guide to Cultural Strategy](#)."

8. CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP

“Arts education and youth leadership go hand in hand. The leadership aspect changes things from attending and being taught at, to participating, to being in it and really experiencing it. It allows people to feel like they’re not just a spectator in an organization, but they’re a part of it.”

– SUKARI WRIGHT, RYSE CENTER

“We are really focused on supporting our teaching artists, in addition to our young creatives. As much as we can, we are creating salaried positions where benefits kick in. We are focused on the mental and emotional well-being of the team. The people power for this work is often underestimated — the depth of the work, the toll that it takes, especially in the multilayered pandemic of COVID, racism, and violence.”

– VILLY WANG, BAYCAT

8. CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP

Organizations center and nurture youth leadership. They make space for young people's leadership within workshop and rehearsal spaces and within the structure of the organization. They support young people in developing their leadership skills and provide pathways through which they can take on increasing leadership responsibilities. They believe that agency is critical to their development as creators, and that young people's voices and creativity can shape their communities. Organizations amplify young people's voices by presenting and distributing their artwork.

Organizations also invest in the leadership and professional development of teaching artists. They believe that practicing artists who model the ways that creators think, work, and shape community are powerful mentors for young people. They invest in teaching artists' development as artists, teachers, and mentors. They recognize and honor the demands of mentoring young people in multiple ways — in growing their expertise in an art form, as well as supporting their personal growth and healing. Organizations also recognize and honor the additional demands on BIPOC teaching artists who are holding space for BIPOC youth in the context of systemic racial injustice.

What you might see or feel:

- Paid youth leadership roles in the organization and pathways for leadership development — e.g., apprenticeships in different roles in the organization, including teaching artist, communications, marketing, executive director.
- Older youth and alumni mentoring younger youth and taking on production roles for performances and events.
- Alumni returning as teaching artists.
- Teaching artists who are on salary with benefits.
- Teaching artists receiving support for their own artistic practice, like schedule flexibility to accommodate rehearsals and performances and stipends to develop new projects.
- Teaching artists sharing their professional practice with students — for example, inviting students to their performances, involving students in their gallery showings, and reflecting on their artwork with students, both as part of their teaching practice and arts practice.
- Teaching artists articulating a clear, shared point of view on what constitutes quality instruction and receiving paid professional development that helps them grow within that framework.
- Teaching artists mentoring one another in teaching teams or cohorts.
- Seasoned, master teaching artists collaborating with newer teachers.
- Organizations allocating resources to support the mental and emotional well-being of staff.
- A temperament of joy, generosity, and flexibility among program leaders.

9. AGILITY AND RELEVANCY

“Every day is different; you have to treat it different. It’s critical to be able to see the things that people are bringing into the space with them. What we do is shaped by what’s happening that day — what people are feeling in the moment.”

– SUKARI WRIGHT, RYSE CENTER

“Strong organizations are not opportunistic, but nimble. They are able to offer back the innovations in the field. They adapt to what young people are going through in the moment. They are not entrenched.”

– WENDY LEVY, ALLIANCE FOR MEDIA ARTS + CULTURE

9. AGILITY AND RELEVANCY

Organizations are agile. They invite young people to bring their full selves and lived experience into the room; respond to their needs, learning styles, and leadership; and adapt instruction as needed. They recognize and acknowledge the contexts for young people’s creative work — including the structures, relationships, culture, and events that shape and constrain their voices. They meet young people where they are and scaffold teaching and learning to help them develop the skills and capacities they need to move forward on their journey, both as artists and people. They emphasize deeper learning and long-term mentorship over standardized instruction.

Organizations embrace new artistic genres, practices, technologies, and entrepreneurial practices that are relevant to the art forms they teach, the young people they engage, and the careers young people want to pursue. They are willing to shift and change, while at the same time holding onto the powerful practices and mission that are core to their work and the cultural forms they convey. They don’t lean on past successes, but continually reevaluate the relevance of their work to the communities they serve.

What you might see or feel:

- Check-in questions that invite young people to share what they are bringing into the space on a specific day, for example, “If you were the weather, what would you be?”
- Young people and teaching artists talking about what’s happening in the world and how it is affecting them.
- Young people pushing staff to adapt their practice to be more relevant, and staff who are willing to be pushed.
- Teaching artists tailoring activities to young people’s learning needs and styles, and adapting or throwing out lesson plans to respond to needs expressed in the moment.
- Young people charting their own path for growth as artists with the support of staff.
- Organizational leaders flexibly shifting organizational structures to support young people and staff as they respond to emerging opportunities and needs.

10. DEEPENING PRACTICE

“When we evaluate, it’s not just about the art; it’s about the socialization, the culture of the program. All these things married together affect young people. Talking to parents is important, even just informally in the hallway. We get the context of the young person’s life. It’s not always about the output — the process is important. It’s labor intensive, individual. It’s beyond a written survey.”

– LATANYA TIGNER, DIMENSIONS DANCE THEATER

“When you make evaluation about deepening practice, that’s our superpower as artists.”

– MIKO LEE, TEACHING ARTISTS GUILD

10. DEEPENING PRACTICE

Organizations continually deepen and refine their practice. They include individual and group reflection in every phase of their work and center processes of rehearsal and revision inherent in arts practice. They build on the power of the arts to embody learning and make it visible. Young people share their work regularly — work in progress, as well as final products — and learn to give and receive feedback that supports and uplifts their growth and creativity.

Staff build long-term mentoring relationships with young people that allow them to support and witness growth over time. Staff also welcome the insights of caregivers and listen carefully to what they say about how young people are growing and what they need. Organizations have a culture of humility and learning.

Organizations supplement the evaluation methods that are embedded in their arts practice with other approaches, when those approaches are effective at answering questions that they have about their practice — for example, equipping them with feedback from young people as experts on program impact, strengths, and areas for potential growth. Organizations engage the evaluation methods necessary to produce data requested by their partners — in particular, funders and schools — and to the greatest extent possible try to focus such evaluation on questions of mutual interest. They resist doing evaluation that isn't meaningful to them because of the time and resources that it takes. They pair data with stories that convey a felt sense of their work and its impact for young people and their communities.

What you might see or feel:

- Young people sharing work in progress and receiving feedback from peers.
- Young people writing about what they are creating and deconstructing and explaining their own artistic process.
- Teaching artists giving performers notes at the end of a rehearsal on what's working and specific things they can do to strengthen their performance.
- Young people revising their work based on feedback.
- Portfolios and culminating exhibitions, performances, and other capstone projects that make learning visible.
- A spirit of curiosity among staff, with a dedication to how they can strengthen their programs.
- Staff having conversations with caregivers in the hallways about how things are going with young people.
- Paid time for staff to reflect and iterate on their practice together.
- Formative program evaluation guided by questions that are of interest to staff and youth.
- Youth and staff sharing stories that demonstrate the impact of their work, while ensuring that young people maintain agency over their own stories and that “trauma stories” are not used for organizational advancement.
- Young people circling up at the end of a session or performance to give each other props, recognizing one another's growth and contributions to the group.

III. Conclusion

“Individual change and transformation takes time. It does not happen in a one-day workshop. It requires time and stamina, as does the work of organizational change, community change, and systems change.”

– JORDAN SIMMONS, EAST BAY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

For organizations that are committed to this kind of powerful arts education practice, the above dimensions are a constant work in progress. They are always engaged in the hard work of deepening their practice and adapting their programs to the needs and desires of specific young people, in specific communities, in specific moments in time. Their work is necessarily deep and long term.

The power this practice holds is the power of transformation. It transforms learning environments by honoring young people as creators and adapting teaching and learning in all the ways that shift requires. It transforms communities by centering and amplifying young people's creativity and leadership, by building understanding and belonging, and by contributing to a community's cultural life. It transforms beliefs, stories, relationships, systems, and structures that shape the world by engaging the power of the arts to help people see, feel, and understand things as they are and as they could be. It supports young people's transformation into their whole selves.

It does all this with an awareness that art cannot be created in a vacuum. Art is shaped by what people bring to it and art communicates. It builds and conveys culture. Engaging young people as creators means that their relationships to their context are relevant — including their relationships to culture, community, and to structures and systems of power that shape their experience. It means that their own agency, voices, and stories are required. It means, not only teaching or providing access to the arts, but recognizing and facilitating what young people access, shift, and transform through the arts.

All this underscores the fact that social justice is an inextricable part of powerful arts education practice in its design and impact. Because art cannot be created in a vacuum, decisions about what art forms organizations teach, about whose experience is welcomed and included in the creative process, about whose stories are amplified, seen, and heard matter. Adults and youth sharing power and young people developing their voices and abilities to express themselves and shape culture and community matter. Connection, collaboration, mutual learning and belonging matter. These dimensions of powerful arts education practice have bearing for social justice, both in their presence and absence.

WORKING GROUP

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STUDIO PATHWAYS

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EAST BAY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Lauren Stevenson INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER AND CONSULTANT

Latanya Tigner ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR & PROGRAM
DIRECTOR
DIMENSIONS DANCE THEATER

Sukari Wright YOUNG CREATOR
RYSE CENTER

INTERVIEWEES

Karen Altree Piemme DIRECTOR
RED LADDER THEATRE COMPANY

Tandy Beal ARTISTIC/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
TANDY BEAL & COMPANY

Rebecca Blair MANAGING DIRECTOR
TANDY BEAL & COMPANY

Tearra Brintley YOUNG CREATOR
RYSE CENTER

Courtney Brown PROGRAM DIRECTOR
LARKIN STREET ACADEMY
LARKIN STREET YOUTH SERVICES

Elisa Callow INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

Wendy Cilman DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
SANTA ROSA SYMPHONY

Krista DeNio ART PROGRAM MANAGER
LARKIN STREET YOUTH SERVICES

Tara Dorabji DEPUTY DIRECTOR
CENTER FOR CULTURAL POWER

Mario Gaytan YOUNG CREATOR
THE DAVID'S HARP FOUNDATION

Marbella Jimenez ALUM
ARTS AND HUMANITIES ACADEMY
BERKELEY HIGH SCHOOL

Ayame Keane-Lee ALUM
ARTS AND HUMANITIES ACADEMY
BERKELEY HIGH SCHOOL

Wendy Levy EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ALLIANCE FOR MEDIA ARTS + CULTURE

Nyree McDaniels YOUTH CREATOR
RYSE CENTER

Riley Reinas YOUNG CREATOR
THE DAVID'S HARP FOUNDATION

Tamaira "Miss Tee" Sandifer CEO
STUDIO T ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Kyziah Shavers ARTIST
YOUTH DANCE INSTRUCTOR
ALUM OF ALVIN AILEY AND DESTINY ARTS CENTER

Siena Starbird YOUNG CREATOR
YOUTH IN ARTS

Käthe Swaback CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
OFFICER
MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

Villy Wang FOUNDER, PRESIDENT, AND CEO
BAYCAT

POWERFUL ARTS EDUCATION RESOURCES

| RESOURCE | NOTES | CREATIVITY & CRAFT | SELF-DISCOVERY & HEALING | VOICE & STORYTELLING | COLLABORATION & MUTUAL LEARNING | HOLDING SPACE | BELONGING | SOCIAL JUSTICE | CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP | AGILITY & RELEVANCY | DEEPENING PRACTICE | CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT | CULTURAL STRATEGY |
|---|---|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------|----------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| <u>BOSTON YOUTH ARTS EVALUATION PROJECT HANDBOOK</u> | Handbook for evaluating youth arts practice. | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | |
| <u>BOSTON YOUTH ARTS EVALUATION PROJECT WORKBOOK</u> | Workbook for evaluating youth arts practice. | | | | | | | | | | ● | ● | |
| <u>BUILDING CREATIVE CAREER PATHWAYS FOR YOUTH</u> | A field scan of creative career pathways done for Los Angeles County. | ● | | | | | | | ● | | | | |
| <u>ARTS2WORK</u> | Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training for creative careers. | ● | | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | | | | |
| <u>EXCELLENCE ON STAGE AND IN LIFE: THE MOSAIC MODEL FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE ARTS</u> | Mosaic Youth Theatre's Creative Youth Development model/evaluation. | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | | ● | | | ● | |
| <u>YOUTH ON THE MOVE!</u> | Destiny Arts Center's guidebook for creating original dance and theater productions with youth. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● | |
| <u>CREATING DESTINY: YOUTH, ARTS, AND SOCIAL CHANGE</u> | A case study of the Destiny Arts Youth Performance Company. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | ● | |
| <u>STUDIO THINKING</u> | Resources and frameworks for engaging Studio Habits of Mind and Studio Structures in the classroom. | ● | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>8 HABITS OF THINKING LEARNED FROM ARTISTS</u> | An overview of the Studio Habits of Mind for teachers. | ● | | | | | | ● | | | | | |
| <u>CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND THE BRAIN</u> | Zaretta Hammonds' work on the impact of culturally responsive teaching on the brain. | | | | | | ● | | | | | | |
| <u>CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE ARTS TEACHING AND LEARNING IN ACTION</u> | Examples of culturally and linguistically responsive arts activities for classroom educators. | | | | | | ● | | | ● | | | |
| <u>DO YOUR LESSONS LOVE YOUR STUDENTS?</u> | Frameworks for culturally responsive teaching and learning through the arts. | | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | ● |

POWERFUL ARTS EDUCATION RESOURCES

(CONTINUED)

| RESOURCE | NOTES | CREATIVITY & CRAFT | SELF-DISCOVERY & HEALING | VOICE & STORYTELLING | COLLABORATION & MUTUAL LEARNING | HOLDING SPACE | BELONGING | SOCIAL JUSTICE | CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP | AGILITY & RELEVANCY | DEEPENING PRACTICE | CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT | CULTURAL STRATEGY |
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| <u>RISE UP! AN AMERICAN CURRICULUM</u> | A curriculum inspired by <i>Hamilton: An American Musical</i> that uses creative inquiry to explore power and lineage and help students express their personal narratives. | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | | | | | |
| <u>PURSUING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A RACIAL EQUITY LENS: A CALL TO ACTION</u> | Recommendations for connecting Social and Emotional Learning and equity. | | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | | | |
| <u>CREATIVE WELLBEING: ARTS, SCHOOLS, AND RESILIENCE EVALUATION</u> | An evaluation of healing-informed arts activities in Los Angeles County public schools. | | ● | | | | | | | | ● | | |
| <u>TIPS FOR HEALING-INFORMED ARTS EDUCATION INITIATIVES: EVALUATION</u> | Tips for evaluating healing-informed arts education. | | ● | | | | | | | | ● | | |
| <u>CASEL</u> | Resources for teaching about social and emotional learning. | | ● | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>THE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES) QUIZ</u> | A tool for understanding impacts of childhood trauma. | | ● | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>TAKE THE ACE QUIZ — AND LEARN WHAT IT DOES AND DOESN'T MEAN</u> | NPR's user-friendly overview of the ACEs quiz. | | ● | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>A CONVERSATION ABOUT CULTURAL STRATEGY</u> | An overview of cultural strategy. | | | | | | | ● | | | | | ● |
| <u>MAKING WAVES: A GUIDE TO CULTURAL STRATEGY</u> | A guide to cultural strategy from the Culture Group. | | | | | | | | | | | | ● |
| <u>NO GOING BACK: A COVID-19 CULTURAL STRATEGY ACTIVATION GUIDE</u> | The Center for Cultural Power's guidebook for artists and activists during the COVID pandemic. | | | | | | | ● | | | | | ● |
| <u>CELESTIAL NAVIGATION: HOW TO FUND CULTURE CHANGE IN THE U.S.</u> | A roadmap for how funders can support artists and cultural strategy organizations making social change, developed by Surdna Foundation with arts and culture leaders. | | | | | | | ● | | | | | ● |

POWERFUL ARTS EDUCATION RESOURCES

(CONTINUED)

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| <u>COMMUNITY-BASED ARTS ORGANIZATIONS: A NEW CENTER OF GRAVITY</u> | An exploration of the contributions of community-based arts organizations to cultural ecosystems, healthy communities, and healthy democracy. | | | | | | ● | ● | | | | | ● |
| <u>NOTES ON A CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR BELONGING</u> | Aimed at storytellers, artists, organizers, cultural strategists, funders, and other collaborators, this report offers ideas for how cultural strategies can be developed for the greatest impact. | | | | | | ● | ● | | | | | ● |
| <u>THE PROBLEM OF OTHERING: TOWARDS INCLUSIVENESS AND BELONGING</u> | A discussion of othering and belonging. | | | | | | ● | ● | | | | | |
| <u>THE CIRCLE OF HUMAN CONCERN</u> | A video and curriculum addressing concepts of othering and belonging. | | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | | | |
| <u>TAKE A LOOK AT OURSELVES</u> | Belonging through arts, a BAYCAT case study. | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | |
| <u>LOS ANGELES COUNTY CULTURAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION INITIATIVE</u> | Links to programs, reports, and a literature review related to Los Angeles County's cultural equity and inclusion initiative. | | | | | | ● | ● | | | | | ● |
| <u>WHY BLACK LIVES MATTER CURRICULUM</u> | A BLM curriculum by Wide Angle Youth Media. | | | | | | ● | ● | | | | ● | |
| <u>RYSE THEORY OF LIBERATION</u> | Theory of Liberation used at RYSE Center. | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | |
| <u>BAY AREA TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE VALUES</u> | A framework and resources for setting shared values and accountability for transformative justice. | | | | | | | ● | | | | | |
| <u>STORY OF US</u> | A process for storytelling for social change. | | | | | | | ● | | | | | |
| <u>10 QUESTIONS FOR YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS</u> | Questions designed to help young people develop successful civic agency in a digital age. | | | | | | | ● | | ● | | | |

POWERFUL ARTS EDUCATION RESOURCES

(CONTINUED)

| RESOURCE | NOTES | CREATIVITY & CRAFT | SELF-DISCOVERY & HEALING | VOICE & STORYTELLING | COLLABORATION & MUTUAL LEARNING | HOLDING SPACE | BELONGING | SOCIAL JUSTICE | CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP | AGILITY & RELEVANCY | DEEPENING PRACTICE | CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT | CULTURAL STRATEGY |
|--|--|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------|----------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| <u>TEACHING FOR CHANGE</u> | Resources for social justice in the classroom. | | | | | | | ● | | | | | |
| <u>SETTING THE AGENDA: NATIONAL SUMMIT ON CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT</u> | An overview of Creative Youth Development (CYD) practice and strategic priorities for the CYD field. | | | | | | | | | | | ● | |
| <u>WHAT IS CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT?</u> | A definition of Creative Youth Development, crafted by youth leaders. | | | | | | | | | | | ● | |
| <u>THE RISE OF CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT</u> | An overview of the emergence of the creative youth development field. | | | | | | | | | | | ● | |
| <u>CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE LIBRARY</u> | A collection of resources on Creative Youth Development from the National Guild for Community Arts Education. | | | | | | | | | | | ● | |
| <u>MIDCASTING TOWARD JUST FUTURES: CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT'S WAYMAKING TO SYSTEMS CHANGE THROUGH AND BEYOND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC</u> | A report on the essential roles that Creative Youth Development music organizations play in their communities, from the Lewis Prize for Music. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| <u>BAYCAT & THE GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS: A CASE STORY</u> | A Creative Youth Development case story of BAYCAT's partnership to produce video content for the Golden State Warriors. | ● | | | | | | | | | | ● | |
| <u>IMAGINATIVE ACTUALITY: LEARNING IN THE ARTS DURING NONSCHOOL HOURS</u> | A discussion of the impact of imaginative creative practice in community-based youth arts programs. | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● | ● | | ● | |
| <u>LIVING THE ARTS THROUGH LANGUAGE-LEARNING: A REPORT ON COMMUNITY-BASED YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS</u> | Findings from a national research study identifying outcomes associated with learning in youth arts organizations. | ● | | ● | ● | | | | ● | ● | | ● | |
| <u>THIRD SPACE: WHEN LEARNING MATTERS</u> | A story of ten schools that transformed the teaching and learning environment through arts integration. | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | | | | | | |
| <u>KID SMART, NEW ORLEANS</u> | A powerful arts integration model. | ● | | | | | | | | | | | |

POWERFUL ARTS EDUCATION RESOURCES

(CONTINUED)

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| <u>THEATER IN THE CLASSROOM: EMBODYING CREATIVE INQUIRY</u> | A resource for helping students embody creative inquiry through theater. | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● | | |
| <u>ARTSESEARCH</u> | A clearinghouse of research focused on the outcomes of arts education. | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | | | | | |