

Beyond Study Guides and Assemblies: Increase the Impact of your Arts Education Programs

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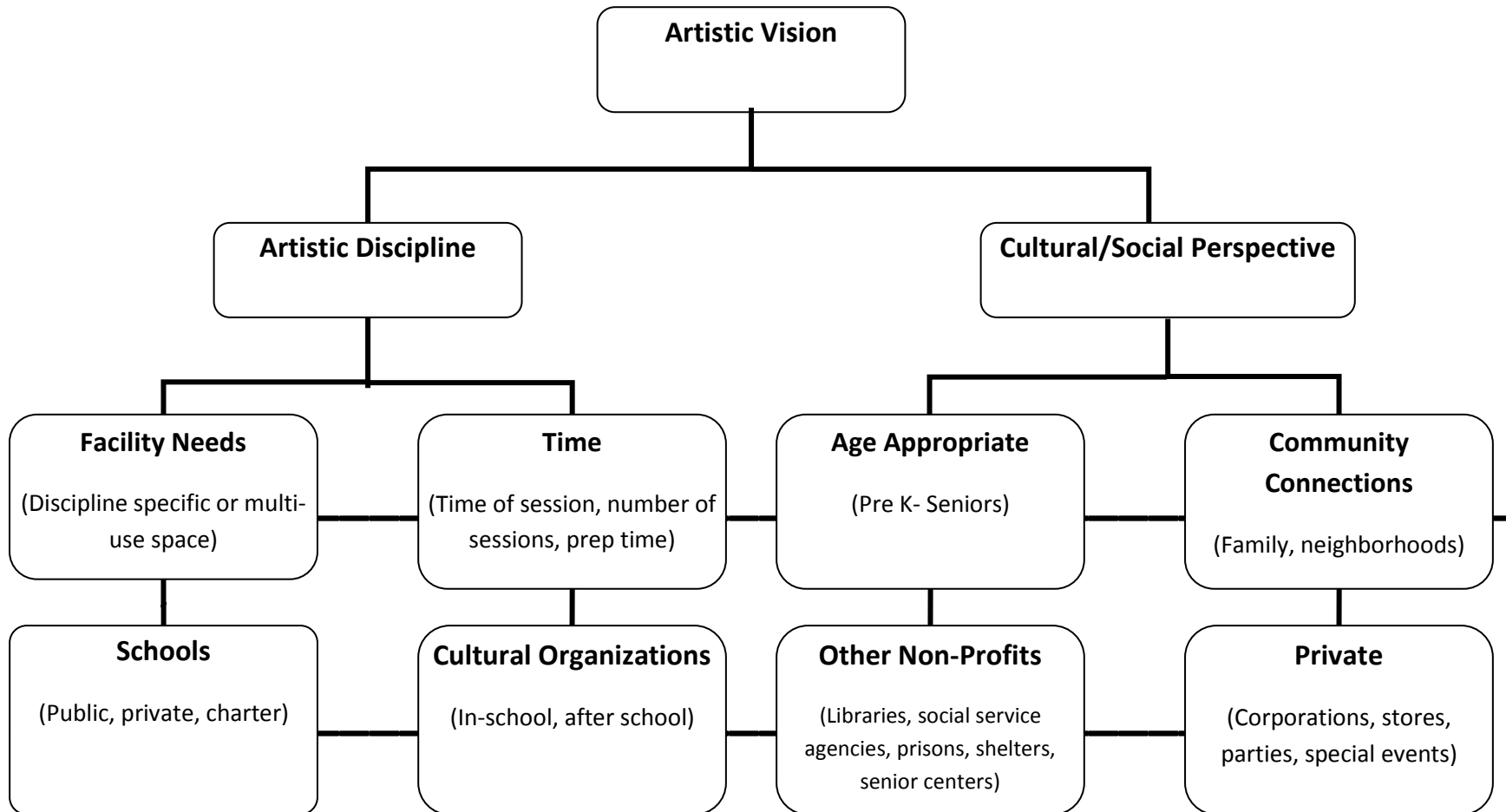
United Way Building

Presented by the Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation
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**Teaching Artist Program
Determining Your Audience for Education Programs**



INCREASE THE IMPACT OF YOUR ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMS WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

After determining the artistic point of view and audience for your education programs, you may feel that working within a school setting could be the best fit for your organization. In order to investigate this further, work through these questions with your staff and/or board, and use them as guidelines when assessing a potential partnership with a school.

Curriculum

Increasingly, schools are pressed to cover a set of curriculum standards in all program areas. This means you will have a better chance of success of securing programs if you can demonstrate how a school can link your program to a required part of their curriculum. This can be as broad as “building literacy and writing skills” or “promoting healthy lifestyles with movement and dance” – or specific to a curriculum standard focusing on local history, printmaking or world cultures.

- What is the content of the education program you are developing that promotes your strengths as an organization and those of your teaching artists?
- Where is the best fit for this program content within a school curriculum? Take into account the age of the students, the curriculum standards (find them at www.), your upcoming exhibitions or performance season.
- Can you add components to your curriculum that would also promote writing, reading, critical reflection, problem solving, and other important learning skills?
- Where are specific opportunities, one-time or on an ongoing basis, to connect your education curriculum to your artistic product?

Teaching Artists

The quality and effectiveness of your program depends on the preparation, skills and support of your teaching artists.

- Do you have artists within your organization who have demonstrated that they are effective teachers or do you need to identify/train these artists?
- Are these artists familiar with working in school settings and linking to curriculum? If not, how will you train these artists to do this work?
- How do you support your teaching artists in defining roles with your host school, managing logistics, materials and supplies, and providing ongoing communication?
- What is an appropriate system for payment that takes into account their planning time, prep time, teaching time, culminating event, and assessment?

Duration/Timing

The degree of flexibility within a school setting varies. Elementary school classes in which students stay in the same classroom all day are more flexible than high schools that change classes every 45 minutes or so (which can yield only about 35 minutes of teaching time.) However, some schools may work on a different schedule (block scheduling or double periods for some classes) and a committed school partner may be able to find ways to extend your time in the classroom.

- Given the curriculum you are considering, what is the *minimum time per class* you will need to accomplish your goals? This is especially important with disciplines that require set-up/clean-up as part of teach day's activities.
- Given the curriculum you are considering, what is the *minimum number of sessions* you will need to accomplish your goals?
- Could you work with multiple classrooms in one day to expand your reach into the school and make the work more efficient for your teaching artists?
- What will be the schedule for these sessions, e.g. once a week, every day for two weeks?
- Is there a flow to the work that would require flexibility with your sessions, e.g. once a week until the week you install the mural or prepare the performance, at which time you would come every day?

Class Size

Class size varies depending on grade, classroom and school. Some classrooms may include more than 30 students.

- What is the maximum class size in which you can safely and effectively conduct your program?
- How many teaching artists will you need per classroom to safely and effectively conduct your program?

School Support

The law requires that a certified teacher remain in the classroom at all times while you are presenting your program. However, an engaged host teacher will make the teaching artist's work more effective and build the skills of the classroom teacher or arts specialist to use once your time at the school ends.

- To what degree do you wish to have the classroom teacher or arts specialist participate in planning, presenting and implementing your program?
- At a minimum, you will need to set aside time to plan your program with the host site. How much planning time will you need before and during the program, and how much planning time can the host spend with you?
- What other information can the school provide to make your role in the classroom more effective (e.g. classroom management rules, reading level of students, number and accommodations for special needs students)
- If you are integrating your program into the curriculum, how will you get the information you need from the host teacher to make this effective?

- Do you expect the host teacher to move the project forward between visits? If so, how will you communicate this before and during the project.

Logistics

The logistical support of the school is crucial to your effectiveness and to building an experience that is safe for your students.

- What space is required to effectively and safely conduct your program? Where can you be flexible and what are the 'deal breakers' for your discipline and program?
- If you are in a school for an extended period of time, is there a secure space to store supplies or equipment?
- Are there logistical issues regarding transportation and parking for your teaching artists?

Community Connection

Though you may be working with a specific classroom in a school, you will garner support and enthusiasm if you can also provide a broader experience to the school community.

- If you are working with a core group (one class or one grade), can you add other components that will allow you to reach more students like a performance or exhibition by your organization?
- Is there an existing parent organization and, if so, can you engage parents as volunteers in the classroom or at the final event?
- Is there a culminating event for families and community members that showcases the process and activities of the program?

INCREASE THE IMPACT OF YOUR ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMS WORKING IN COMMUNITY SETTINGS

After determining the artistic point of view and audience for your education programs, you may feel that working in community settings could be the best fit for your organization. Community settings can include youth serving organizations, social service or human service agencies, libraries, senior centers, homeless shelters or prisons. "Students" refers to any participants in your program, from toddlers to seniors.

In order to investigate this further, these are a few of the questions you can work through your staff and/or board. You may also use them as guidelines when assessing a potential partnership with a host site. The "host" may also be the artistic side of your own organization that may or may not be adept at connecting with or developing education programs.

Curriculum

When you are working in a community setting, you will have more freedom to develop curriculum to meet your organizational goals and perspectives. Good teaching practice requires a well-developed curriculum that builds skills sequentially in ways that are age-appropriate, artistically sound, and engaging.

- What will be the focus of your curriculum? Will you be teaching purely a specific discipline, engaging community issues and/or building related life skills?
- Where are specific opportunities, one-time or on an ongoing basis, to connect your education curriculum to your artistic product?
- Will there be a specific context or community goal in which this work will be placed? If so, what research, resources or people do you need to connect with to make this approach successful?
- Taking into account the curriculum and skills of your teaching artists, what age (pre-K to seniors) will this curriculum address?
- What level of students will you work with? Are you developing beginning skills for those with no experience in the art form or do you require an existing base of knowledge?
- What would be the arc of skills and experiences that a student would develop in your program? What is the sequence in which you would introduce these skills and how many sessions will it take to make a complete program?
- Will there be a culminating event (even as a work-in-progress) that will mark the end of a sequence in the program, or the end of the program itself (if not ongoing.)

Teaching Artists

The quality and effectiveness of your program depends on the preparation, skills, and support of your teaching artists.

- Do you have artists within your organization who have demonstrated that they are effective teachers in a community setting or do you need to identify/train these artists?
- Are these artists available and willing to engage with the host site and community for things like recruiting students, connecting with families, or working within the context of the goals of the host site?

- How do you support your teaching artists in defining roles with your host site, managing logistics, materials and supplies, and providing ongoing communication?
- What is an appropriate system for payment that takes into account their planning time, prep time, teaching time, culminating event and assessment?

Defining Goals and Roles

It is important to make sure you are clear about the goals and roles of each partner. Depending on the size and organizational structure of the host site, there may be varying degrees of infrastructure or bureaucracy within the site itself to support or hinder collaboration.

- What is the organizational style of your organization and how does this mesh with that of the host site?
- If you are working in a community site that is not arts-centered, what are their driving goals and does your program support and promote similar goals?
- How will you coordinate securing funds for your program, including agreeing on approaches to potential funders?
- Who has primary responsibility for the program budget including raising funds, setting pay rates, ordering and paying for materials?
- Will there be a cost for students to participate in the program and, if so, how are these funds collected and distributed?
- To what degree does the host staff participate in planning, presenting and implementing the program?
- What other support do you need from a host site to initiate and continue to provide the program?

Recruitment and Retention

Unlike schools, programs taking place at community sites do not usually have a 'captive audience.' Rigorous recruitment efforts and continued efforts to maintain participation are crucial strategies for successful programs.

- Will your program be part of ongoing community program with consistent attendance? Are there other art programs through which you could identify students to participate in your program?
- Based on the experience of the host site, are there specific times, days or times of the year when you are most likely to have successful attendance? Can you ask prospective students when they are most able to attend?
- Who will have primary responsibility for recruiting students for your program and for consistent follow-up to encourage attendance over time?
- Can you use community events or activities to generate interest and enrollment in your program?
- What is the maximum class size in which you can safely and effectively conduct your program? What is the minimum class size for the program to move forward and when is this decision made?
- Are there issues of transportation or other logistics that could be barriers to students attending your program? If so, can you devise a strategy with the host site to reduce these barriers?
- Are family members or other supportive adults engaged in the host site in ways that can boost recruitment and continued attendance?

Logistics

The logistical support of the host site is crucial to your effectiveness and to building an experience that is safe for your students.

- What space is required to effectively and safely conduct your program? Where can you be flexible and what are the 'deal breakers' for your discipline and program?
- If you are in a host site for an extended period of time, is there a secure space to store supplies or equipment?
- How will you arrange access to the building and space, especially if you need access outside of regular class times (for set up, to prepare for a culminating event?) Are there issues of security for your teaching artists or students?
- How will you handle artist fees and other expenses (for example, as direct payments or reimbursements?)



BUT THERE IS NO MONEY...

What do you do if someone expresses interest in your arts education program but says there is no money? Sometimes, there really is no money, but other times you may be able to frame the program in a way that can move the project forward.

Make This Project a Priority: There is usually money for the things people value most. Your job is to make arts education a higher priority by showing them the ways that this program will help move their larger goals forward or will solve a specific problem their organization or community is facing.

Define the Project More Broadly: There may not be money for arts, but there may be money for a goal or program area that your arts program supports. Depending on the focus and audience, you may be able to access funds designated for literacy, community development, physical fitness, criminal justice, after-school or summer programs, programs for immigrant communities, or other pools of money outside of the arts.

Make Connections: Look for ongoing, funded programs for which your program could provide more content and depth. Joining forces with existing efforts raises the value and priority of your program while increasing the impact of their ongoing programs by providing high quality, interactive, focused arts content.

Raise Funds Together: The organization may be able to apply for grants to bring your program into their community. This requires some research, a longer timeline, and coordination with the host site. You can do your part by providing strong application materials including well-articulated goals, lesson plans, and reasonable budgets. Potential funders can go beyond the obvious sources to include local business associations, community development corporations, parent teacher organizations, or local government representatives.

Who Loves You? Another way to raise funds together is to approach people who already support the organization (donors, volunteers, alums) with a specific project and outcome in mind. "We need to raise \$1,250 to sponsor a dance residency for our preschoolers."

Not Always Free: In some communities, some or all of the participants may be able to pay some or all of the costs of the program. Consider reasonable fees and sliding scales to make participation valued but open to all, regardless of ability to pay.