



Evaluating the Present:
Envisioning the Future of
Theatre Arts Education in California





Table of Contents:

Section One:

The Value of Theatre Education

- THE IMPORTANCE OF THEATRE EDUCATION
- VALUE OF THEATRE EDUCATION TO THE BUSINESS WORLD
- CURRENT STATUS OF THEATRE ARTS EDUCATION



Section Two:

Quality Theatre Education

- KEYSTONES OF QUALITY THEATRE EDUCATION
- LEARNING STYLES AND QUALITY THEATRE EDUCATION
- ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL THEATRE ARTS PROGRAMS
- MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL THEATRE ARTS PROGRAMS
- HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL THEATRE ARTS PROGRAMS



Section Three:

Quality Theatre Educators

- PRE-SERVICE TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- GENERALISTS TEACHING THEATRE ARTS
- THEATRE ARTS SPECIALISTS



CETA Statement of Purpose

The California Educational Theatre Association (CETA) exists to develop and promote the highest standards in teaching, learning, networking, curriculum, professional development, research, scholarship, production, and accreditation criteria from pre-kindergarten through entry to university level theatre education.

Through advocacy, conferences, workshops, festivals, and special events, CETA is dedicated to strengthen local administrative support for theatre, enrich curriculum, enhance classroom teaching/learning techniques, promote research and scholarship, and refine educational production practices. CETA fosters cooperation with many established arts organizations in an environment that embraces an atmosphere of diversity. CETA assists theatre arts educators in providing ALL students, pre-K-12, with learning opportunities in theatre arts that promote personal expression and the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary in all walks of life.

This paper is intended to assist teachers, counselors, curriculum developers, administrators, superintendents, school board members, parents, and community members in determining the acceptable content of theatre arts programs K-12, including courses offered to meet the state graduation requirement or for entry into a state college or university.

The 2006-2008 CETA Board of Directors formally approved this position paper by a unanimous vote on September 9, 2007.

Authors:



Carolyn Elder (CETA President 2002-2004)



Carol Hovey (CETA President 2004-2006)



Gai Jones (CETA President 2000-2002)



Amanda Swann (CETA President 2006-2008)

The Value of Theatre Education

“The real driving force behind dramatic arts is what it does for the emotional, physical, and cognitive abilities of the student...” (Jensen, 2001, p. 76)

The success of any theatre arts course depends on the competence of the teacher assigned to that course. Elementary teachers should receive training and professional development at a level higher than currently required by the State of California. An educator assigned to teach any theatre course should be credentialed in theatre arts.

Prior to entering a teacher training program, a prospective theatre teacher should either major in theatre arts or have the equivalent to a BA in Theatre selected from courses offered as part of a theatre arts major, areas of theatre study, such as:

- Performance – acting, stage, TV, film, broadcasting, puppetry, children’s and youth theatre, musical theatre, mime, movement, voice, and improvisation;
- Production – theory and practice, directing, playwriting, dramatic literature, theatre history, criticism, and dramaturgy;
- Theatre Management – arts management, marketing, public relations, publicity, facility management;
- Technical Design and Construction – costumes, make-up, sets, props, sound, lighting, and multimedia.

Guided by qualified theatre educators, direct study and active participation in theatre offer unique situations in which students may develop and demonstrate their cognitive and affective skills, critical modes of thought, cultural values and beliefs, and their comprehension of self and others. The study of historical and contemporary theatre and its reflection in the students’ creation of theatre assists in developing and exploring the values inherent in a society: appreciating diversity, making informed decisions, and expressing individual vision. Aesthetic valuing and self-awareness are intrinsic to theatre education and need to be developed, nurtured, and encouraged in all students, building their self-esteem and self-confidence, so that the quality of their lives is enhanced. Theatre arts education provides students with practical industry preparation as well as essential skills in communication and cooperation which are required for any career choice.

Taught by credentialed theatre educators, standards-based theatre arts curriculum and instructional strategies must encourage students to experiment, seek multiple solutions, be courageous in the expression of an individual idea, and willingly flexible. Theatre arts courses should provide the opportunity for students to apply their personal visions, experiences, and imagination in producing theatrical experiences. Important corollary skills include articulation and understanding of: script and character analysis; theatre history; cultural representation; theatrical terminology; theatre management; technical production; and the roles of the actor, playwright, dramaturge, director, and designer.



Theatre arts course emphasis on the creative process is strongly supported by the five component strands: artistic perception; creative expression; historical and cultural context; aesthetic valuing; and connections, relationships and applications. To provide a consistently strong and sequential standards-based theatre arts curriculum, all theatre arts courses must be taught by a credentialed theatre educator.

The Importance of Theatre Education

Of all the arts, theatre is the one most concerned with the study of humanity. The process, the “knowing and doing” learning which is built into sequential standards-based education, provides student(s) experience and evaluation. The process of then preparing for a performance requires the student(s) to experience and value the perspective of another human being. As students endeavor to learn to act, to be involved in the many aspects of theatre, and to learn to entertain audiences with the art and craft of theatre, they are gaining understanding of themselves and others. Theatre education is a tool for the study of history, culture, diversity, and the human experience as a whole.

Theatre is a creative, collaborative, and cooperative art form, dependent upon audience, performer, and playwright. Each learning opportunity and each performance is a unique experience created both by the performer and the personal experience of each audience member. Taking part in theatre either in an informal classroom experience or an elaborate production as a performer, audience member, director, designer, writer, or technician is fundamental in experiencing the ensemble process.

Theatre bridges the world of the theoretical and concrete by providing students with valuable academic and career foundations as well as opportunities for personal, social and physical development. Theatre is a career choice for our youth. California has the seventh largest economy in the world and the entertainment industry is the third largest industry in the state of California. Through theatre, the youth of today have the opportunity to influence the world. Theatre education develops skills vital for the challenges that will face youth both professionally and intellectually in the twenty-first century.

According to a 2001 survey conducted by the California Arts Council, many educators and parents indicated they know that theatre arts education is good for students. Philosophers and education reformers have written passionately about the importance of arts education (including theatre). As early as 1897 the American education reformer, John Dewey, advocated for arts education in public schools and believed that art should be part of the daily experience of all humans. Dewey contended that art is part of the daily life and work of humans at all status and socio-economic levels. However, for humans to have an aesthetic experience, the art needs to be seen and perceived, not just identified or recognized; thus the need for arts education. (*Dewey, 1934*)

Following the work of reformers such as Dewey, theatre practitioners and educators of the early twentieth century began to develop methods and curriculum for theatre in the classroom. Leaders of the creative drama movement included Winifred Ward, Viola Spolin, Brian Way, Dorothy Heathcote and Geraldine Siks. These pioneers used various combinations of theatrical techniques such as movement, pantomime, creative writing, improvisation, vocal activities and theatre games to create both informal learning experiences and formal performances that they believed provided a forum for children to develop social and academic skills as well as develop as individuals. (*Cornet, 1999, p. 227*)

“In a drama of the highest order there is little food for censure or hatred; it teaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect.”

Percy Bysshe Shelley,
Poet



“Nothing, in fact, more truly portrays us as we are and as we could be than the play and the players.”

Miguel de Cervantes,
Playwright

Arts education advocates, such as Howard Gardner, the author of *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*, have focused on an education rich in the arts and found that it improves the student's understanding and achievement. Theatre allows concepts to materialize from page to stage; collaboration is the essence of its being, not only necessitating the activation of multiple intelligences within the individual but between individuals in an ensemble creation. The process of creating theatre requires students to use all six levels of Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals* (Bloom, 1956) including basic knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The theatre process scaffolds skills from the most rudimentary to the complex, requiring the student to acquire physical, mental, vocal, and creative discipline while using their individual skills cooperatively within a group to create a common piece of theatre.

Other educators such as Claudia Cornett and Elliot W. Eisner expanded the importance of arts education by arguing that the arts have been an important part of the human experience in all cultures and during all time periods; therefore, the arts should be a required part of an education:

Humans tell our story through the arts.... The arts teach us that what we all think or feel cannot be reduced to words. The arts were the first and primary form of communication, a unique means of knowing, thinking, and feeling, based in imagination and cognition...When students engage in the arts they have the opportunity to be smart in different ways. (Cornett, 1999, p. 5)

Educator Maxine Greene, author of *Releasing The Imagination*, makes an impassioned argument regarding theatre education:

It takes imagination on the part of the young people to perceive openings through which they can move. It is well established by a variety of sources over many decades if not centuries that arts education (including theatre) is important for kids. (Greene, 1995, p. 14)

French playwright, Antoine Artaud defined the essential connection of theatre to conceptual language:

The theater, which is in no [one] or [single] thing, but makes use of everything—gestures, sounds, words, screams, light, darkness—rediscovers itself at precisely the point where the mind requires a language to express its manifestations...To break through language in order to touch life is to create or recreate the theatre. (From the Preface of *THE THEATER AND ITS DOUBLE*)

In *Strong Arts, Strong Schools: The Promising Potential and Shortsighted Disregard of the Arts in American Schooling*, Charles Fowler takes a similar stance:

We do not need more and better arts education (which includes theatre) to develop more and better artists any more than we need mathematics in the core curriculum primarily to develop mathematicians. Rather, we need more and better arts education (including theatre) to produce better-educated human beings, citizens who will value and evolve a worthy American civilization. Better-educated human beings: That is the justification for making the arts an essential part of a general or basic education. (Fowler, 1996, 13-14)

During the 1990s, many researchers conducted objective studies to determine the effects and benefits of arts education. Some of the early studies demonstrated that arts education changed test scores. According to the College Board, their 1995 study titled "Profile of SAT and Achievement Test Takers", found that the Scholastic Assessment Tests (SAT) scores of students who studied the arts more than four years were 59 points higher on verbal and 44 points higher on the mathematics portion than students with no coursework in the arts. (The College Board, 1996.) The efficacy of arts studies was reaffirmed when the College Board reported that for the 1999 school year, SAT scores showed that "those in drama study (were) 44 points higher, and those with acting or production experience were a whopping 53 points higher than non-dramatic arts students on the averaged math and verbal scores." (Jensen, 2001, p. 76)

Consistently from 2001-2005, reports by the College Entrance Examination Board show that students of the arts continue to outperform their non-arts peers on the SAT. In 2005, SAT takers with coursework/experience in acting and play production scored 65 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 34 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework or experience in the arts. Scores for those with coursework in drama or theatre appreciation were 52 points higher on the verbal and 22 points higher on the math portion.

(Source: The College Board, *Profile of College-Bound Seniors National Report for 2001, 2002, 2004, and 2005*. Data for these reports was gathered by the Student Descriptive Questionnaire, a self-reported component of the SAT that gathers information about students' academic preparation.)

Critical Links, the compendium of arts education research published by Arts Education Partnership in 2002, contains several studies that compared groups of students who received theatre education with groups of students who did not receive theatre education.

These reports attempted to demonstrate what qualities within or accompanying dramatic activities are important contributors to educational effectiveness. Theatre experiences such as role-playing, directing, rehearsing and performing are representative of meta-cognitive activities and enable students to transfer learning in theatre to academic achievement. The majority of these studies are at the elementary level, which may explain why many of the studies focus on outcomes in areas of reading, language development and narrative understanding. Several studies showed that the earlier a child was exposed to creative drama, the more significant the impact on student academic achievement. (*Critical Links 2002.*)

Shirley Brice Heath's report spanning an eleven-year period was published in *Critical Links*. The low Social Economic Status (SES) students involved in arts that Heath studied were:

1. two times more likely to win an award for academic achievement
2. four times more likely to win school wide attention for academic achievement
3. four times more likely to participate in a math or science fair
4. three times more likely to win an award for school attendance
5. over four times more likely to win an award for an essay or poem
6. nearly twice as likely to read for pleasure
7. over three times more likely to be elected to class office in school
8. over four times more likely to engage in community service
9. eight times more likely to win a community service award



In another study in *Critical Links*, James S. Catterall, Richard Chapleau, and John Iwanaga worked to determine if high school seniors who had been highly involved in the arts since at least eighth grade perform better academically than students who have not been involved in the arts. The study found that students enrolled in arts classes earned a higher GPA, performed better on standardized tests, performed more community service, watched fewer hours of TV, and reported less boredom in school:

...57.4 percent of high arts-involved students scored in the top two quartiles of standardized tests, compared to only 39.3 percent of low art-involved students; and 56.5 percent of high arts students scored in the top two quartiles in reading, compared to 37.7 percent of low arts students; and 54.6 percent of the high arts students scored in the top two quartiles of history/geography/citizenship tests, compared to 39.7 percent of low arts students. The same relationship was upheld when the lowest SES quartile of students was examined, though the difference was smaller in magnitude. (*Catterall, Chapleau, Iwanaga, 1999, p. 70*)

In his thesis, *Drama Discovery*, Michael Jacobs also cited findings matching the *Critical Links* research as he explored the impact of the dramatic process on the students in his study:

Young children who engage in dramatic enactments of stories and texts improve their reading comprehension, story understanding and ability to read new materials they have not seen before. The effects are even more significant for children from economically disadvantaged circumstances and those with reading difficulties in the early and middle grades. (*Jacobs pg.32-35*)



Learning in individual art forms as well as in multi-arts experiences engages and strengthens such fundamental cognitive capacities as spatial reasoning (the capacity for organizing and sequencing ideas); conditional reasoning (theorizing about outcomes and consequences); problem-solving; and the components of creative thinking (originality, elaboration, flexibility). (*Jacobs pg.32-35*)

Community, parent, teacher, legislative and administrative support for arts education has increased in the past years due to a growing body of knowledge about the effect of arts education and the increased ability of arts supporters to advocate for arts education. Leading arts education advocates, including Claudia Cornett, Charles Fowler, the California Education Theatre Association, the California Alliance for Arts Education, the California Arts Council, and the Governors Association have all produced publications and web pages [including documentation both statistical and anecdotal] with lists of reasons supporting theatre arts education. While each list is organized in a different manner, the content is remarkably similar and can be consolidated and summarized as follows:

1. Theatre Arts allows student to develop and practice basic life skills including:
 - a. creative problem solving, decision making, visualizing goals
 - b. social skills including respect, poise, confidence, self discipline, intra-personal and interpersonal skills
 - c. work skills, such as: cooperation, collaboration, punctuality, dedication, concentration, acceptance of disappointment, adaptability and attention to nuance

2. There is a strong link between academic achievement and arts education. The arts:
 - a. improve (according to research) academic achievement and test scores
 - b. develop verbal and nonverbal communications skills
 - c. increase concentration and comprehension through engagement
 - d. use the senses, stimulate emotions and intellect
 - e. increase cognitive involvement with subjects
 - f. provide alternative methods of assessment
 - g. provide avenues of achievement for students who might otherwise not be successful
 - h. provide motivation for students to stay in school
 - i. enlighten our understanding, making it deeper and more comprehensive
 - j. enhance other curriculum areas
 - k. provide a means for aesthetic development

3. Theatre arts can enhance students' psychological well-being by:
 - a. allowing students to express feelings and emotions under the protection of a character or script
 - b. increasing empathy and new perspectives
 - c. helping students consider moral issues and develop values
 - d. recognizing that dramatic conflict and resolution are a natural component of theatre
 - e. helping students to define who they are
 - f. providing enjoyment, entertainment and enlightenment
 - g. developing a value of perseverance and hands on craftsmanship
 - h. role-playing skills for coping with daily life in American society

4. The value of arts education has been recognized and its status has improved in recent years as evidenced by the establishment of standards and legislation such as NCLB which establishes arts education as a core subject that should be available to all students.



Value of Theatre Education to the Business World

American industry and business benefit from theatre arts education. The needs of modern employers, who require ever increasingly creative, flexible, and competent employees, are one of the driving forces behind modern education reform that calls for the inclusion of the arts for all students. The *California Visual and Performing Arts Framework* states, "California is an international leader in the technology and entertainment industries; providing our students with an education in the arts supports our state's future and our economy." (p.v)



In 2002, the *National Governors Association Center for Best Practices* stated arts education is one of the best methods to improve the workforce and reduce incidents of crime. In addition, the governors determined that investment in arts education has a positive influence on the workforce because of the skills developed by arts education.



As documented in *Arts Works*, the report of the California State Superintendent's Task Force on the Visual and Performing Arts, the California Task Force received testimony during 1996 as to the importance of art education.

New technologies for the arts, arts-related computer applications, and emerging arts-related careers are especially vital in California. One study of the arts found that spending on the non-profit [an organization whose primary objective is to support an issue or matter of private interest or public concern for non-commercial purposes, without concern for monetary profit] arts alone supports more than 115,000 full-time and part-time jobs in the state. In addition, entertainment products, such as movies, television shows, video games, and music CDs, form one of the country's highest export categories. According to the Motion Picture Association of America--California Group, in-state expenditures of the film, television, and commercial production industries have grown to \$20 billion a year and produce jobs for an estimated 500,000 Californians. (p. 13)

In other testimony, executives from the digital-effects industry testified that they must hire 80% of their new employees from out of state or overseas because California schools do not provide enough basic arts education. In addition to improving the workforce, arts education serves as a minimum requirement for many jobs. The report, *Arts at the Core of Learning 1999 Initiative*, produced by the Business Circle for Arts Education, claims arts education helps students develop basic skills to succeed in the classroom and in the workforce including a sense of craftsmanship, quality task performance, and goal-setting. (1999, pp. 1-2)

The citations above refer to arts education as a whole, but theatre arts education specifically addresses skills valuable to employers hiring students for jobs in any profession. Success in theatre is based upon progress and growth as an individual while students stretch their imaginations and explore their creativity. In theatre arts, students learn practical problem-solving and critical thinking skills by doing scene work, character analysis, stagecraft, and design. In theatre arts students practice taking risks and making bold choices: skills that will serve them well in whatever profession they pursue. Theatre arts training provides vital career skills and multiple opportunities for employment in the entertainment industry, but more importantly, in most professions. Dynamic presentation skills are useful in job interviews and business presentations, and strong people skills are essential in working as a collaborative team member within any employment setting.

Current Status of Theatre Arts Education

During the last 22 years, arts education has made several important strides forward. Prior to 1983, there was no high school diploma requirement for arts education. In 1983, California began requiring one year of either arts education or foreign language for high school graduation. In 1999, visual and performing arts became a college preparatory subject requirement when both the University of California and California State University systems changed entrance requirements (effective in 2003) to include one year of visual or performing arts.

In January 2001, as required by Senate Bill 1390 (Murray), the California State Board of Education developed and adopted the *California Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards*. This document provides content standards in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts for grades pre-kindergarten through twelve. In addition, the same document defines five strands of an arts program: artistic perception; creative expression; historical and cultural context; aesthetic valuing; and connections, relationships and applications. Therefore, in the state of California, theatre arts courses should provide students with learning opportunities that implement the intent of the California State Board of Education approved Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Content Standards. All curricula must be designed to align directly with the Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards, at least, at the proficiency level in each of the five component strands.

Advocates for arts education such as California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE) have persuaded California elected officials to introduce legislation that strengthened theatre education, as well as dance, music and visual arts. In 2003 bills such as SB 469 (SCOTT), the Instructional Materials Bill, co-sponsored by CAAE and the PTA, that provided for materials funding as well as continued support of professional development for the visual and performing arts, were adopted.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) passed in 2001 defines the arts [including dance, music, theatre, and visual arts] as core academic subjects under the 2001 federal legislation. NCLB helps to address the expectations for content knowledge for the course of instruction. Competence in teaching theatre arts requires academic content knowledge in theatre arts, skill and experience in creating theatre and in theatre criticism, and contextual knowledge of theatre and the theatre history of cultures throughout the world.

University of California/California State University Guidelines for the “a-g” Requirement Policy Effective 2003: Theatre, dance, music and visual arts became a college-preparatory subject when the University of California and the California State University systems changed entrance requirements to include one year of visual and performing arts.



Quality Theatre Education

Theatre builds self-confidence.

Theatre teaches group dynamics.

Theatre nurtures grace under pressure.

Theatre develops specific tangible skills.

Theatre offers a liberal education.

Theatre fosters creativity.

Finally, theatre heralds the roar of the crowd and the smell of the greasepaint.

Based on the work of Daniel L. Patterson, Associate Professor of Theatre at Keene State College, and Whit Andrews, Executive Director of The Little Theatre of Winston-Salem, NC.

Keystones of Quality Theatre Education

Based on the assertions in Charles Fowler's book *Strong Arts, Strong Schools*, CETA has identified the nine keystones of quality theatre arts education:

1. *Standards-Based Instruction in Theatre Arts*

Like other academic subjects, theatre arts has both a sequential and spiral curriculum. Students need to study theatre throughout their educational career and connect it to the world around them. The foundation for this has been created by the development and adoption of the *California Visual and Performing Arts Standards* and the *California Visual and Performance Arts Framework*.

However, there remains much work to be done in the area of implementation of standards-based instruction in all classrooms and at all schools, as can be seen from the key findings excerpted from *An Unfinished Canvas* as shown below:

- 90% of the elementary schools fail to provide a standards-aligned course of study across all four arts disciplines.
- Elementary students who receive arts education in California typically have a limited, less substantial experience than their peers across the country.
- Inadequate elementary arts education provides a weak foundation for more advanced arts courses at the secondary level. *(Woodworth, pg. 4)*

Even more telling are the figures for elementary student participation in theatre arts instruction:

In dance and theatre, California students get far less instruction than in music and visual arts: those students who receive instruction (fewer than one in five) typically receive just over 10 hours per year—or about 20 minutes per week—of instruction in each discipline. *(Woodworth, pg. 9)*

At the middle and high school levels the findings show:

- Secondary arts education is more intense and substantial than elementary arts education, but participation is limited.
- Only 4% of California middle schools and 28% of high schools offer comprehensive arts programs that include all four disciplines.
- It is unknown, however, how much arts education a typical high school student receives over the course of a high school career, or what percentage of students take at least one yearlong course in a single arts discipline to achieve “proficiency” as envisioned in the state’s content standards. These figures are not available because California lacks a student-level data system that permits tracking a student’s course-taking over time. *(Woodworth, pg. 11)*

2. *Skills and Knowledge in Theatre*

The skills and knowledge taught in theatre are many and varied; they overlap and reinforce skills taught in all academic curricula, and synthesize those skills for application in all areas of a student's life. Students gain multiple benefits in the area of social skills, communication skills as well as interpersonal skills, and build self-confidence as they explore ways of accessing their imaginations in both concrete and abstract forms. Theatre arts gives students the ability to conceive, decipher, discern, choose, and then apply visual, aural, physical, emotional, and psychological choices to tell a story that may educate, enlighten, and/or entertain others. In theatre arts courses, students learn: problem-solving, story structure--sequencing, identifying and creating details, critical thinking, physicalizing thought, taking turns, cooperative learning, timing, balancing, positive focusing for emotional and physical energy, and listening skills.

3. *Quality Teaching*

The most important resource in education is the qualified teacher. A strong recommendation was made in *An Unfinished Canvas* to "signal to teachers, parents, and students that the arts are a core subject by providing professional development for teachers and establishing assessment and accountability systems for arts education." (*Woodworth, pg. 4*) As in other subjects, there is the need to establish minimum standards and training for theatre educators. Secondary theatre teachers should have college-level training equivalent to a Bachelor of Arts in theatre arts, and elementary teachers should continue to increase their skills through professional development, unless preservice programs begin to include theatre education courses within that preservice training. All educators teaching theatre arts must continue to create, provide, and train themselves through quality professional development.

4. *Equal Access*

Theatre education is part of a basic education that should be available to all students, at all grade levels, in all schools. Theatre is the only truly interdisciplinary art in existence. A student in theatre naturally integrates language arts (reading, writing, speaking); math and science (building sets, costumes, defining timing/pace/rhythm, lighting and sound cues and effects, technical elements, color theory, problem-solving); physical education (movement, stage combat, body awareness); social sciences and history (historical/political/social-economic/cultural context); as well as dance, music, and the visual arts. The benefits are abundantly clear, as theatre provides students an identity and a connection to the larger school community while they practice taking risks and making bold choices in a safe environment—all skills that will serve them well in whatever profession they pursue. Special needs students, whether they be English Language Learners, labeled gifted and talented, or special education students, benefit from theatre arts at all grade levels. Key findings excerpted from the *An Unfinished Canvas*, "Students attending high poverty schools have less access to arts instruction than their peers in more affluent communities." (*Woodworth, pg. 4*) Every single student deserves access to a theatre arts education no matter how impoverished their homes or schools.

5. *Adequate Facilities and Time on Task*

Students cannot excel in a subject, without materials, facilities, and time spent studying that subject. Students at all grade levels must have an appropriate space in which to create theatre being taught in a sequential, standards-based curriculum. In an elementary setting, the school should at least have a basic auditorium stage with stage lights, stage drapes, and a sound system. Middle schools and high schools should have a dedicated theatre space, either a black box or full theatre facility. A comprehensive list of theatre arts materials addressing the appropriate uses of revenues for equipment and supplies in the theatre arts classroom was provided within the 2006 document published by a coalition of all the Visual and Performing Arts and Physical Education professional organizations.

Theatre arts is both process and performance. Basic theatre arts skills can be practiced in any space, but the performance needs both a stage and an audience. Several protocols are essential in the theatre arts process. Creating theatre requires time for the students to analyze and understand the text then determine style, design, and character interpretation (artistic perception); to research historical and cultural context; to explore connections, applications and relationships as they design and build the technical elements; to rehearse and critique their work as they progress to performance (creative expression); and to evaluate their own performance and audience response after the performance is over (aesthetic valuing). Integrating theatre arts into a multi-disciplinary curriculum can be one way of 'having time' for theatre arts, but close attention must be paid to maintaining the integrity of the theatre arts content standards.



6. *Quality Assessments*

Theatre arts must include multiple ways of assessment. As a core curriculum, the learning of theatre arts students must be assessable at all steps during the process of creating theatre. Practicing theatre arts is inherently multi-modal learning since the theatre process requires the scaffolding of many skills into culminating tasks, provides immediate feedback while teaching the value of rising above failure as a learning experience, and provides constructive criticism. Concrete assessment tools such as: portfolios, performances, rubrics, self-assessment, written responses, interviews, and observations, as well as standardized tests, all allow the theatre arts educator and student to document and evaluate the learning process.

7. *Develop Partnerships*

By reaching out to businesses, community organizations, political leaders, and parents, schools continue to strengthen their bonds with arts organizations. Theatre arts programs in schools and districts throughout the state have connected with arts supporters that provide additional resources, funding and increased visibility of their theatre arts programs. Effective models of partnership have been provided by districts and counties such as the Los Angeles Unified School District, San Diego County, Alameda County, and the California Arts Project—TCAP. These models demonstrate how districts, counties, and outside organizations can work together to provide professional development for K-12 theatre arts educators. It is imperative, however, to create and develop partnerships that will sustain theatre arts programs over time. Unfortunately, An Unfinished Canvas shows that “schools are increasingly partnering with external organizations, but few partnerships result in increased school capacity to provide sequential, standards-based arts instruction.” (Woodworth, pg. 4)

8. *Advocacy*

Theatre arts educators and advocates of arts education must develop convincing, informative, and persuasive means for advocating for the arts at all levels, including school, local, state, and national. First and foremost, theatre teachers should belong to their professional organization, CETA—California Educational Theatre Association. CETA speaks on behalf of its membership, advocates to theatre teachers and supports them in learning to advocate for themselves and their theatre arts program. CETA provides state level representation and connects its membership to our state arts advocacy organization, CAAE—California Alliance for Arts Education. CETA works to further the creation of the theatre credential, the development of state funding and grants, and to provide local, grass-roots strategies for promoting theatre arts in the community, district and school. A prominent voice for theatre arts is CETA’s California Youth in Theatre Day in March of each year in Sacramento.

9. *Leadership*

Theatre arts students develop strong leadership skills. By creating theatre, students are able to incorporate valuable life lessons, skills, and their own personal growth and self-knowledge into their interactions with others. Theatre students explore and incorporate their “real world” experiences through artistic expression using body, voice, mind and heart, and learn empathy and humanity by placing themselves in another’s “shoes.” They learn to value and show respect for the opinions and ideas of others through theatrical character development, by working cooperatively and collaboratively, and then expressing themselves with strong public-speaking skills.

Theatre arts students excel in a leadership position because the process of creating theatre places them ‘inside’ the continuum of human experience and the human condition. They learn lessons of tolerance and acceptance of themselves and others in the world. Theatre students understand that the process of collaboration as an ensemble or team leads to a more meaningful product for the entire group, as everyone is necessary and valued.

Learning Styles and Quality Theatre Education

**“The stage is not merely the meeting place of all the arts, but also the return of art to life.”
Oscar Wilde**

Human beings learn through more than one mode of perception. One way of looking at learning is through the sensory modes: visual (seeing), auditory (hearing and speaking) and tactile-kinesthetic (touching-moving). Each person has preferred ways of learning, referred to as learning styles. Most people learn in all three styles with one mode dominant and the others less so. These preferences tend to persist through life.

Elementary school education traditionally requires all three of these styles of learning. Typically, high school coursework designed in most disciplines asks students to learn primarily through either visual means or auditory means and is often limited to listening to a lecture with the tactile-kinesthetic mode of learning and the auditory mode of speaking neglected. This can be limiting for all learners. Theatre arts is unique in that it addresses and encourages all three styles and is inherently multi-modal learning.



Theatre arts students learn to develop the following abilities: to be seen and heard by the audience through the use of space utilizing the voice and body; to communicate verbally and non-verbally by showing, not telling, with the whole body; to give physical attention and stay focused; and to convey inner action (i.e. thinking physically and with expression).

Social interaction during high school years is complex. Learning experiences that address growth in this arena must cultivate self-knowledge with the ability to work alone as well as the ability to work cooperatively and creatively during group and partner interaction. The study of theatre arts contributes

to the development of these interpersonal and intra-personal intelligences, by exploring and acquiring knowledge through movement, voice and written word. In addition, exploration of beauty and form—embedded in all the arts—can facilitate development of the social person through its potential awakening of the heart and conscience of the human being.

The process of creating well-crafted theatre naturally generates fun and joy in many students. With this doorway to creativity open, students are positioned to practice the patience, focus, discipline and persistence required to learn. These personal attributes and habits can enhance career and lifelong skills that help students to achieve personal and professional success.



Elementary School Level Theatre Arts Programs

Every child in every school every day should have the opportunity to be involved in theatre arts in the classroom.

Teaching theatre arts at the primary grade levels provides the generalist teacher the opportunity to teach standards-based curriculum for their own classroom students in all four arts disciplines: dance, music, theatre and visual arts. Of even further benefit, is the assigned theatre arts specialist who can teach sequential standards-based theatre arts instruction to all the students in all the primary grades at elementary school sites. *The Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools* provides some very helpful and specific guidelines for theatre arts instruction in the primary grades as an integral part of their curriculum, whether taught by a generalist or a theatre arts specialist, as outlined below:

When reading the theatre standards at a particular grade level, one must know which theatre standards were accomplished in all the previous grade levels to understand how expectations are based on prior learning. In addition, an examination of the standards for any of the art forms at a given grade level reveals overlaps and points of connection across the strands because the strands and the visual and performing arts content standards are intrinsically related.

Each arts discipline and artistic process has many entry points throughout the grades. Because particular ideas, concepts, and experiences are critical to student achievement at certain times in their artistic and cognitive development, the standards provide students with a picture of what is essential to know and be able to do, kindergarten through grade eight, in each of the four arts disciplines. The key theatre content standards provide a beginning point for standards-based instruction in each of the elementary school and middle school grades, focusing on fundamental content that students with any level of prior knowledge need to move to the next level of understanding and expression. Like the complete theatre standards, the key theatre standards build up the content in each successive grade level and spiral throughout the curriculum for kindergarten through grade eight. They are essential in preparing students for beginning-level high school theatre arts courses in which they engage in more focused and independent work. (pg. 23)

Drama (theatre) in the classroom has also attracted wide attention among researchers. Here we witness a concentration of studies of very young children -- kindergartners and preschoolers to third or fourth graders. These studies track the effects of dramatizing stories or texts on children's understandings of such stories. Drama shows consistent effects on narrative understanding as well as on component skills: identifying characters, understanding character motivations, reading and writing skills, and interpersonal skills such as dealing with conflict. (Critical Links, pg. 70)

Theatre arts is an invaluable conduit to becoming a whole person, and of all the arts, theatre arts is inextricably tied to language arts and to communication with others. The generalist teacher who teaches the theatre arts standards as a core part of their curriculum is giving students the tools for critical thinking, strong social skills, and an aptitude for lifelong learning. A strong elementary school theatre arts program not only provides multiple opportunities for experiencing the arts individually and collectively but also highlights cross-curricular applications. The evidence continues to support the essential value of theatre arts being taught in the language arts curriculum whether it be Pre-K or high school students:

The effect of arts study on reading is similar. Because reading is the educational skill upon which all others in our lives are based, the *No Child Left Behind Act* focuses on literacy and sets the goal that all students read by the 3rd grade. We know from research that the arts can help achieve this goal, and that certain forms of arts instruction enhance and complement reading instruction. Studies have shown, for example, that when creative dramatics are a component of reading with preschool-age children, skills in comprehension and vocabulary increase. (Huckabee & Paige, 2005)

One limitation to providing a strong theatre arts program at the elementary level is that:

Arts facilities and materials are lacking in most schools. Elementary schools are far less likely than secondary schools to have dedicated space for arts education. Of those offering arts instruction...10% have it for dance, and just 6% have it for theatre. This lack of dedicated, equipped space for arts instruction at the elementary level is not typical of the country as a whole. Compared with data collected as part of the most recent national study of arts instruction in public schools (Carey et al., 2002), far fewer of California's elementary schools than elementary schools in the nation as a whole have dedicated facilities for visual arts and music (Exhibit 4). (Woodworth, pg. 7)

In the early 1980s the National Council of Teachers of English stated that informal classroom drama or theatre education helps students:

- develop improved skills in reading, listening, speaking, and writing.
 - Involvement in drama promotes written and oral skills as well as aiding vocabulary growth. Participants must listen attentively so the drama can continue, and must communicate their thoughts and ideas to others in the group. They will read with a purpose background materials needed to do a drama.
- develop skill in thinking analytically, in acting decisively and responsibly.
 - Drama challenges the participants to develop thinking skills in an organized, dynamic group activity within the security of the classroom. This practice involves students in shared problem-solving that often focuses on significant historic and contemporary events.
- increase and sustain the ability to concentrate and follow directions.
 - Informal drama develops spontaneously with no script through the interaction of the group. Participants must pay attention to the suggestions given by the teacher or by group members.
- strengthen self-concept by cooperative interaction with others.
 - In drama, participants learn to be contributing group members by sharing ideas in a “give and take” situation. Students quickly realize that the success of the drama depends entirely on their thoughtful involvement.
- learn to make commitments and fulfill them.
 - Successful drama depends on all participants making a commitment to their task, comprehending what the other students are doing. Participants are responsible for working within the specified limits of the activity.
- learn to deal effectively with interracial, intercultural, and multi-ethnic situations.
 - Drama, by means of varied simulations, emphasizes a widening acceptance of the personalities, beliefs, and ideas of other peoples and cultures.
- increase motivation to learn.
 - Active participation in creating classroom drama broadens students’ experiences, clarifies information, generates new ideas, and improves attitudes toward learning.
- develop individual and group creativity.
 - Drama begins with simple sensory exercises, and extends to far more complex enactment of scenes. Participants in drama create and respond to imaginative works developed by the group.
(NCTE, Article 107608, 1982)

An abstract of research and study on classroom drama in 2002 reported the following findings:



In dramatic activities, children learn to use language effectively and creatively while they are experiencing different points of views, looking for solutions, and discussing ideas. Although several terms have been used to refer to “classroom drama” such as creative dramatics, educational drama, theater games, sociodramatic play, role drama, and role playing, the terms “creative drama” and “drama in education” are umbrella concepts which embrace all the various types of improvised and informal drama used in classrooms. According to some authors, the goal and focus of creative drama are twofold: (1) creating “an experience through which students may come to understand human interactions, empathize with other people, and internalize alternative points of view” (Wagner, 1988, p. 5), and (2) developing understanding and learning through drama rather than “some finished product such as a well-mounted play” (Heinig, 1993, p. 22). In other words, the purpose of educational drama is not to produce a theater play for an audience but to contribute to students’ personality growth and facilitate their learning by having them respond to situations, dilemmas, or conflicts assuming the role of imagined characters. It should be also noted that almost all students, regardless of their artistic skills for acting, can perform and benefit from this type of drama. For example, some of the techniques used in creative drama such as mime, movement exercises or invented dialogue give every child an opportunity to be actively engaged in drama without necessarily having to act or speak (Stewig, 2000).

According to Heining (1993, p. 6), the value of drama in teaching language arts comes from the fact that “learning language arts becomes more meaningful when it stimulates everyday life experiences.” Dramatic performance can provide students an opportunity to use language to express various emotions, to solve problems, to make decisions, to socialize, and to develop empathy which eventually contributes to their self-esteem and creativity. In addition, drama activities may be useful in the development of oral communication skills, reading, and writing. Through drama, children may discover different styles and registers which are very different from their everyday speech. Wagner (1998) notes that “drama provides children with experiences that enhance their ability to judge the appropriateness of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies for a wide variety of imagined experiences” (p. 35).
(Tartar, 2002)

An Excellent Elementary Level Theatre Arts Program

The *Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools* describes a strong theatre arts program during the elementary school years as including the following:

Arts programs in the early grades provide essential first steps for students as they develop their ability to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and understanding concerning the world around them. Through theatre arts the students gain the knowledge and skills needed to express their ideas creatively in verbal and nonverbal ways. The programs should include performing and experiencing theatre arts as well as talking, reading, and writing about them. The delivery of programs to help students achieve the theatre arts content standards may involve the collaboration of credentialed arts specialists, classroom teacher, professional artists, and other community resource persons to support standards-based arts experiences. For example, the classroom teacher, who knows the curriculum, can provide follow up lessons after a visit by a guest artist or a community performance and can make connections, highlight relationships, and introduce applications as appropriate.

Teachers, knowledgeable about the artistic and aesthetic development of their students, should respect the students' self-expression. They should include activities in theatre arts that relate to the interest of the students, ...performances initiated, designed, and completed by the students, and should balance student-initiated and teacher-directed activities. In addition, by having students read literature about theatre arts and theatre artists that includes stories, biographies, and histories of the theatre, the teacher helps the students understand the connections between the creative work they do and that done by others.
(pg. 12)

Renowned actress, Sarah Bernhardt pronounced, "Our art (theatre) is the finest, the noblest, the most suggestive, for it is the synthesis of all the arts. Sculpture, painting, literature, elocution, architecture, and music are its natural tools." The generalist teacher is charged with teaching all the arts, language arts, the humanities, mathematics, and the sciences as well as social behavior and citizenship. What better medium for teaching to the needs of the whole child than theatre arts?

Libraries Unlimited 2007, currently sponsoring a teaching model called, "ONCE UPON A TIME: *Storytelling, Creative Dramatics, & Reader's Theater for Grades PreK-6*," cites these advantages for the generalist teacher teaching theatre arts as part of their core curriculum:

10 KEY BENEFITS OF USING THEATRE ARTS IN THE CLASSROOM

- Introduce and reinforce vital skills, including listening, comprehension, and higher-level thinking
- Reinforce concepts of character education, boost self-esteem, and get your students working together in harmony
- Explore story structure, characters, setting, plot, theme, and voice
- Recall sequence and details through retelling, and make text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections
- Develop writing and illustrating prompts that foster children's creativity and response to literature
- Enhance students' presentation and public speaking skills
- Explore practical doable ways to motivate and excite even your most reluctant readers and writers
- Inspire your students to read aloud or read alone with comprehension, expression, fluency, and joy
- Rejuvenate, expand, and make memorable new connections with your current book repertoire and exemplary new children's books
- Find unlimited reasons to fall in love with children's literature and stories all over again

Middle School Level Theatre Arts Programs

A student needs the space/distance to find himself and his work-intellectually especially, and certainly creatively. Creativity is the supreme freedom. It is a freedom that requires discipline and rules, yet it is boundless for the person who taps into it. Your (the teacher's) job is to trigger that boundlessness at the same time as you share the rules of discipline.

(From "Letter to a Young Artist" by Ann Deavere Smith)

First and foremost, an excellent theatre arts program must include well-planned and executed standards-based instruction delivered by a highly qualified theatre arts teacher, but a complete theatre arts program should include much more. Middle schools in the state of California can be institutions of learning for students in different combinations of grade levels: grades 6, 7, 8 or grades 7 and 8 or even grades 7, 8, 9. *The Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools* describes a strong theatre arts program during the middle school years as including the following:

Exploration, an important part of a middle school theatre arts program, should include all the requisites of the standards-based elementary-level program with essential additions. Courses in the 'theatre arts' discipline are designed to increase and refine students' knowledge and skills beyond those learned at the elementary school level...to expand their knowledge and skill and to make personal connections with the world, the school, and themselves. When students are taught by theatre arts specialists, they should continue their development in the five strands of theatre arts. Strategies for implementation may include a rotation or exploratory schedule for all students along with yearlong courses for students interested in more in-depth study in theatre arts.

School districts and school administrators and faculty should collaborate with visiting artists and community arts resources to provide a comprehensive theatre arts program for all students that is standards-based and relevant. Middle school students should begin to develop a firm foundation in theatre arts to be prepared for more focused study in theatre arts in high school. Accordingly, articulation needs to occur between the middle school and high school theatre arts teachers. (pg. 12)

The California Department of Education 1987 reform document "Caught in the Middle" recommends that the offering of a wheel of courses should continue throughout middle school with the number of weeks before each course is rotated lengthening in higher grades and allowing the students some choices in 8th grade. CETA supports the recommendations in the reform document "Caught in the Middle" but only to build interest in creating a theatre arts program of study for all students. Children ages 11-14 grow and change more dramatically than at any other time of their lives. Physical growth, social/emotional maturity and abstract thinking all develop during these preadolescent years. Learning experiences should encourage students to work independently and collaboratively to develop writing skills, prepare performances, and create exhibitions that display their appreciation of theatre arts, develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and enhance self-esteem. Students taking theatre arts begin to develop "habits of mind" that foster critical thinking in the form of analytical thought, creative solutions to problems, and innovative ways at approaching complex tasks. Students who develop their cognitive skills will experience corresponding growth in the affective domains of learning. In other words, students who become accomplished critical thinkers begin to build self-confidence and start to enjoy the process of learning complex concepts. The emphasis during middle school years should be on the process of creating theatre rather than on formal productions. Most importantly, at some point during their middle school years, ALL students will experience standards-based theatre arts coursework taught by a qualified theatre arts specialist as part of their core curriculum.



An Excellent Middle School Level Theatre Arts Program

The Middle School Curriculum needs to integrate rigor, while incorporating the responsibility for aesthetic choices. Students should be encouraged to express their individuality, while increasing their self-confidence. Middle school theatre students should be expected to use such terms as vocal projection and subtext as they describe their theatrical experiences.

Through performance, they will begin to demonstrate effective vocal and facial expressions, gestures and timing. In writing plays and short theatrical scenes, they include monologues and dialogues, showing a range of character types from a variety of cultures. Additionally, middle school students will begin to show more confidence in evaluating theatrical experiences by utilizing their knowledge of make-up, stage lighting, scenery, props and costuming.

As sequential theatre skills are learned and practiced, students will begin to demonstrate directorial abilities. They will also improve their acting skills. The middle school student will analyze the dramatic elements used by playwrights and scriptwriters. They will be able to keep a rehearsal script notebook, writing down directions and blocking notes as a play is being produced. Additionally, they will be able to compare and contrast various theatre styles used in different countries and time periods. Through their work in aesthetic valuing, the middle school student is prepared to write a formal review of a theatrical production.

A practical outline of what an excellent theatre arts program adapted to the middle school level should contain would include:

- a commitment to artistic excellence
- positive, energetic teachers, directors, staff, and students
- highly qualified credentialed teachers with college degrees in theatre arts
- credentialed theatre arts educators and directors who are lifelong learners, able to implement innovations from Current readings, workshops, professional associations, and conferences
- the foundation of a sequential Pre-K through 8 program by trained theatre arts teachers in all grades
- standards-based sequential middle school curriculum –
 - o Grade 6 (Middle School Theatre A/B)
 - o Grade 7 (Middle School Theatre C/D or Middle School Theatre Lab)
 - o Grade 8 (Middle School Play Production A/B)
- comprehensive theatre arts curriculum guide for each course
- textbooks, reference books, periodicals, scripts, and recording (audio and video) devices for student use
- two theatre productions presented annually – recommended: one classic play and one musical comedy
- adequate equipment, materials, storage, and facilities for classes and also for productions
- theatre space under the control of the theatre arts teacher, with guaranteed availability
- appropriate class size of 25-30 or less
- programs accessible to participants and audience members with special needs
- video capabilities for student self-evaluation and historical record keeping
- opportunities for students to be involved in all aspects of theatre—including acting, designing, technical theatre, writing, and directing
- occasions for all faculty members of the visual and performing arts department to work with theatre students
- co-curricular activities for those who are in theatre classes and those who are not, with scheduling that allows students to participate in play production activities
- experience in performing for various audiences using material from various playwrights, genres, and styles, and different media
- current information about the numerous opportunities in the theatre to include scholarships and professional opportunities
- participation in middle school theatre festivals for professional adjudication, such as CETA's Middle Stage Festival in northern California
- resources for attending state and college theatre activities, teacher conferences, and other activities outside the local area
- opportunities for students to attend performances by community and professional theatres, colleges, and other schools

(Adapted from Jones, pp. 2-3)

High School Level Theatre Arts Programs

“A talent for drama is not a talent for writing, but it is an ability to articulate human relationships.”

Gore Vidal



“Drama is exposure; it is confrontation; it is contradiction and it leads to analysis, construction, recognition and eventually to an awakening of understanding.”

Peter Brook

CETA recommends that students taking a year of visual or performing arts for graduation achieve all of the following:

- High quality standards-based education in theatre arts (including consistent, sequential instruction designed to ensure that students reach the PROFICIENT level of achievement in each of the five strands of the content standards: artistic perception; creative expression; historical and cultural context; aesthetic valuing; and connections, relationships, and applications)
- The content standards (which establish the basis for curriculum development and professional development for those involved in visual and performing arts programs)
- The concepts, knowledge, and skills gained in theatre arts courses (which apply to or are relevant to many areas of students' present and future life, study, and work)
- Participation in theatre arts courses (giving students an opportunity to assess, with the assistance and expertise of the theatre teacher, their own artistic potential worthy of further pursuit and/or possible career)
- Preparation for advanced theatre study (taking additional theatre arts courses while in high school, such as intermediate and advanced acting, theatre history, stagecraft, play production, playwriting, directing, and/or honors theatre)
- Ability to become appreciative, discriminating audience members

For students to achieve these outcomes, theatre arts courses must be offered at their middle schools and high schools. Unfortunately, the most recent study of arts education by theatre arts specialists in California schools presents these sobering findings:

In California, 91% of **middle schools** offer at least some music instruction, 81% offer at least some visual arts instruction, **44% offer at least some theatre instruction**, and 29% offer at least some dance instruction. **High school figures are** 92% for music, 95% for visual arts, **86% for theatre**, and 51% for dance.

It is unknown, however, how much arts education a typical high school student receives over the course of a high school career, or what percentage of students take at least one yearlong course in a single arts discipline to achieve proficiency as stated in the state's content standards. These figures are not available because California lacks a student-level data system that permits tracking of a student's course-taking over time. (Woodworth, pg. 11)

A complete high school theatre arts program requires adequate materials, supplies and facilities. Much must be done to counteract the fact that:

Arts facilities and materials are lacking in most schools. Along with trained teachers, many schools also lack dedicated space with special equipment (e.g., mirrors and bars in dance rooms, sinks and storage areas for visual arts) for arts education. **In schools offering arts instruction**, music is the discipline most likely to be taught in a dedicated space with special equipment (49%). Visual arts (36%), **theatre (2 %), and dance (21%) are less likely to have an equipped, dedicated space**. Note that these percentages reflect only those schools that actually offer arts instruction; the many more schools that do not offer arts instruction are also likely to lack adequate facilities. (Woodworth, pg. 11)



An Excellent High School Level Theatre Arts Program

First and foremost, an excellent theatre arts program must include well-planned and executed standards-based instruction delivered by a highly qualified theatre arts teacher, but a complete theatre arts program should include much more. In her book, *Raising the Curtain*, Gai Jones (pp. 2-3) gives a practical outline of what an excellent theatre program at the high school level should contain. Several of her suggestions are:

- a commitment to artistic excellence
- positive, energetic teachers, directors, staff, and students
- properly certified teachers
- educators and directors who implement innovations from readings, workshops, professional associations, and conferences
- opportunities for students to be involved in all aspects of theatre—including acting, designing, technical theatre, theatre management, writing, and directing
- occasions for all faculty members of the visual and performing arts department to work with theatre students
- co-curricular activities for those who are in theatre classes and those who are not, with scheduling that allows students to participate in play production activities
- experience in performing for various audiences using material from various playwrights, genres, and styles, and different media
- information about the numerous avocational and vocational opportunities in the theatre
- the opportunity to work in at least three productions a year
- participation in high school theatre festivals for professional adjudication, such as CETA's High School Theatre Festival in southern California
- a children's theatre production presented annually
- adequate equipment, materials, storage, and facilities for both classes and productions
- theatre space under the control of the theatre teacher, with guaranteed availability
- appropriate class size of 20-25 or less
- programs accessible to handicapped participants and audience members
- video capabilities for student self-evaluation
- resources for attending state and college theatre activities, teacher conferences, and other activities outside the local area
- opportunities for students to attend performances by community and professional theatres, colleges, and other schools
- the foundation of a sequential Pre-K through 12 program by theatre arts teachers in all grades
- a varied curriculum and a variety of courses ranging from basic to advanced in theatre crafts, theatre arts, and technical theatre
- a comprehensive theatre arts curriculum guide for each course
- textbooks, reference books, periodicals, scripts, and recording (and video) devices for student use
- support for implementation of contemporary scripts.

Quality Theatre Educators

“What nobler employment, or more valuable to the state, than that of the man who instructs the rising generation.”

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Pre-Service Training and Professional Development

A national survey, *Teaching, Learning and Computing*, conducted by the Center for Research on Information Technology and Organizations (CRITO) collected data from 4000 teachers in regard to professional development activities. This study found that these highly involved teachers also either operated or directed or managed the classrooms in which students were most actively engaged in learning. Further, teachers who were actively engaged in professional development had an influential voice through participating in activities such as: establishing best practices, networking, and contributing to policy, which extended far beyond their classroom and district to the state and national level. Research supports the concept that any time and money invested in quality professional development, especially that which builds collegiality, is a wise investment from which all, the student, teacher, school and community, profit.

Helen Hayes, the first lady of theatre, would agree that becoming a theatre educator is a daunting task, based on her recognition that being in the theatre bears remarkable similarity to being a teacher in the classroom.

... the theatre demanded of its members stamina, good digestion, the ability to adjust, and a strong sense of humor. There was no discomfort an actor (theatre educator) didn't learn to endure. To survive, we had to be horses and we were.
(From *ON REFLECTION*, Helen Hayes)

A teacher is an actor. To desire to teach, a person must have been enthralled by an idea or an experience of some kind himself and must desire that others have the opportunity to know about and be inspired by that same event or material in some way. To be able to transfer ideas, he must develop, in addition to the knowledge he accumulates, the ability to communicate that knowledge. This ability to communicate is an art or skill also known as teaching...
(From *A TEACHER IS MANY THINGS*, Earl V. Pullias and James D. Young)

According to the *California Visual and Performing Arts Framework*: “Successful implementation of the visual and performing arts content standards depends on effective teacher preparation (i.e., pre-service training) and long-term professional development” (p. 180). This pre-service training of college-credit quality should provide teachers with the ability and confidence to plan grade level appropriate, standards-based arts instruction.

It comes as no surprise that *An Unfinished Canvas* shows:

- At the elementary level, arts instruction is often left to regular classroom teachers, who rarely have adequate training.
- As noted above, elementary schools tend to rely on regular classroom teachers to provide arts instruction in their own classrooms. (Music is an exception and is frequently taught by specialists.) However, most elementary classroom teachers have received minimal pre-service training in arts education and thus are typically not well prepared to provide standards-based arts instruction in the four arts disciplines. Those classroom teachers who feel most prepared to teach the arts typically have a background in one or more arts disciplines and/or have received some sort of external support, such as professional development in the arts. However, few classroom teachers receive any such support—86% of elementary schools offered no arts-related professional development in 2005-06.
- Even arts specialists have limited professional development opportunities. They may attend workshops and conferences in their disciplines and/or they may involve themselves in their respective arts communities through performances or exhibitions. However, these activities are based primarily on teachers' own interests and initiative; formal district support is typically limited. As one high school theatre teacher observed, “The district is good about professional growth. They're just not good about our professional growth.”
[Woodworth, pg.7]

School districts should make long term, ongoing professional development available for theatre arts teachers at all grade levels. One of the elements of this professional development should be focused on improving a teacher's ability to teach theatre arts.

As a result of *An Unfinished Canvas's* findings, one of the key recommendations is to:

Improve teacher professional development and consider credential reforms. Many of the teachers providing arts education in California's schools are not adequately prepared. As long as the primary arts delivery system at the elementary level involves regular classroom teachers, the state should strengthen pre-service programs and support professional development initiatives aimed at increasing the capacity of those teachers. Furthermore, if the state is serious about increasing access to dance and theatre, it should consider offering single-subject credentials in these arts disciplines. (Woodworth, pg. 18)

Resources for professional development include university course work and workshops provided by organizations or agencies such as The California Arts Project (TCAP), county offices of education, and the California Educational Theatre Association (CETA).

Professional development deepens the learning of academic content knowledge about the subject to be taught. Theatre arts training develops understanding of the standards for theatre arts at each grade level and the nuances of teaching theatre arts, expands the range of content-specific instructional strategies, increases understanding of how students learn, and teaches how to design effective instruction.

The design of professional development stems from scientific research supporting its formulation, is based upon proven effective learning strategies and includes ongoing assessment. The theatre arts discipline's professional development necessitates teacher knowledge and practice in the discipline, experience in the classroom, and provides time for structured, collaborative learning. Investment in professional development specific to the needs of the theatre educator should include release time during the class day, access to up-to-date technical innovations, contact with the professional theatres in a region for educational outreach, awareness and utilization of theatre supplies and equipment and film practices appropriate for teaching a standards-based curriculum, and training in new practices for teaching to the diverse needs of theatre students as well as new benchmarks and trends.

With the establishment of Visual and Performing Arts Standards both nationwide and statewide, it has become important even for qualified theatre arts teachers to update their skills in the current best practices in theatre arts education in order to provide quality standards-based instruction. It is imperative that theatre arts teachers understand how to utilize standards-based backwards planning, Theatre Arts Integration techniques, and remain current regarding advances in media elements, directing, acting, brain research, technical theatre, classics, improvisations, movement, ...all of the expectations outlined in the framework.

Parker J. Palmer, in *The Courage to Teach*, provides several reasons why participation in continued professional development is important to teachers. Palmer maintains that professional development is very meaningful to teachers' practices for many reasons. According to Palmer (1998), professional development:

1. nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of all teachers
2. infuses the theatre teacher with best available research and practices
3. increases knowledge in theatre teaching strategies, technologies and other essential elements needed to teach the California Theatre Arts Standards to a diverse population
4. helps teachers assure all students achieve high standards of learning
5. rewards educators with greater job security and career advancement
6. develops partnerships, collegiality, and networks
7. reinvigorates teaching
8. inspires change



Generalist Teachers Teaching Theatre Arts

Generalist teachers instructing theatre arts in their classroom need professional development in incorporating sequential standards-based theatre arts education in a multi-subject curriculum and in developing basic content knowledge in theatre arts. The generalist teacher who has taken college theatre courses can incorporate methods of learning used in theatre across the curriculum to engage the students in active participation.

Though these statistical percentages appear to be apocryphal, a research study carried out several decades ago concluded that students retain 10 percent of what they read, 26 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, 50 percent of what they see and hear, 70 percent of what they say, and 90 percent of what they say as they do something.

We live by words and actions and as Confucius said so many centuries ago, “What I hear, I forget. What I see, I remember. What I do, I understand.” Where else are these essential elements wedded in education? Theatre arts trains, equips and empowers students for life by providing “the doing” so they understand what they have learned.

Theatre Arts Specialists

Theatre Arts specialists need structured collaborative time to work with other theatre arts specialists to examine curriculum, course content, and the alignment of Visual and Performing Arts Standards to student learning and student needs. They need to have increased understanding and skills in sequential standards-based instructional design and assessment, instructional strategies, and access to arts tools and technology. Since 2001, when California’s content standards in theatre were adopted, our state standards have matched the national theatre education standards regarding sequential learning through yearlong delivery of theatre education. Theatre Arts specialists need the opportunity to adapt prior courses of study to sequential standards-based learning instruction.

Theatre Education Organizations

American Alliance for Theatre & Education (AATE)	http://www.aate.com
Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE)	http://www.athe.org
California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE)	http://www.artsed411.org/
California Arts Assessment Network (CAAN)	http://www.teachingarts.org/CAAN/
The California Arts Project (TCAP)	http://csmp.ucop.edu/tcap/
California Dept. of Education, Visual & Performing Arts	http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/vp/
California Educational Theatre Association (CETA)	http://www.cetoweb.org
CETA North and CETA South Regional Organizations	
California State Thespians (CST)	http://www.cetoweb.org
Drama Teachers Association of Southern California (DTASC)	http://www.cetoweb.org
Educational Theatre Association (EdTA)	http://www.edta.org
Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival	http://www.kcactf.org
Model Arts Program (MAP)	http://www.teachingarts.org/MAP/
University/Resident Theatre Associations (U/RTA)	http://www.urta.com
USITT (U.S. Institute for Theatre Technology)	http://www.usitt.org
Zeta Phi Eta (National Professional Fraternity for Communication Arts & Sciences)	http://www.zetaphieta.org

Closing Statement

As creators of this position paper, we believe in sequential theatre programming and lifelong learning in theatre arts. We encourage the credentialed theatre educators to work alongside theatre artists, emeritus members of our profession, and volunteers to educate California youth in the art of Theatre. Quality theatre arts education will benefit the future of our children, and hence, our society; the economy of our state, the cultural enlightenment of our community, and the quality of work in theatre by theatre professionals.



Works Cited

The Arts Education Program Toolkit: A Visual and Performing Arts Program Assessment Process.
Sacramento: California Department of Education, 2001.

Bloom, Benjamin, et al. Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals. New York: McKay, 1956.

Brockett, Oscar G. The History of Theatre. 10th ed. Needham Heights MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1999.

"Business Circle for Arts Education, 1999." and "Arts at the Core of Learning 1999 Initiative." ArtsPower.
Retrieved 27 Dec. 2004 <<http://www.artspower.com>>.

California Alliance for Arts Education. "The Success of Millions of California's Students is as Easy as...[Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and ...] The Arts!" [Brochure]. Los Angeles: CAEA, 2001.

--- "History of Legislation: Arts Education in California Over the Past Three Decades." 2004.
Retrieved 12 Dec. 2004 <<http://www.artsed411.org/artsed/index.stm>>.

The California Art Education Association—"CAEA Position Paper on High School Art Courses." Cris Guenter, Ed.D., President CAEA, 2005.

California Dance Education Association—"CDEA Position Paper on High School Art Courses." Susan McGreevy, President CDEA, 2006.

--- "CDEA Mission." 2003. Retrieved 26 Mar. 2005 <<http://www.cdeadans.org/mission.html>>.

California Department of Education. ArtsWork: A Call for Art Education For All California Students. Sacramento: CDE, 1997.

--- --- Caught in the Middle. Educational Reform for Young Adolescents in California Public School.
Report of the Superintendent's Middle Grade Task Force. Sacramento: CDE, 1987.

--- --- The Results of the Arts Work Survey of California Public Schools. Sacramento: CDE, 2001.

--- --- 2001 Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards. Sacramento: CDE, 2001.

--- --- Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve. Sacramento: CDE, 2004.

Catterall, James S. "Involvement in the Arts and Success in Secondary School." 1998.

--- Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development. Deasy, Richard, J., ed. Washington, DC: AEP, 2002

Center for Research on Information Technology and Organization (CRITO). Teaching, Learning and Computing: 1998.
A National Survey of Schools and Teachers. Retrieved 27 Dec. 2004 <http://www.crito.uci.tlc/html/tlc_home.html>.

Cornett, Claudia E. The Arts as Meaning Makers-Integrating Literature and the Arts Throughout the Curriculum. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1999.

Costa, A. L. & Kallick, B. Describing 16 Habits of Mind. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2000.

Craft, Anna. Continuing Professional Development-A Practical Guide for Teachers and Schools. London: Routledge Falmer, 2000.

Dewey, John. Art As Experience. New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 1934.

Dukore, Bernard F. Dramatic Theory and Criticism-Greeks to Grotowski. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1974.

Exploring Theatre. Ed. Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller. San Francisco: West Publishing Company, 2001.

Fogarty, Robin & Stoler, Judy. Integrating Curricular and Multiple Intelligences. Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight, Publishing, Inc., 1995.

Fowler, Charles. Strong Arts, Strong Schools. "The Promising Potential and Short Sighted Disregard of the Arts in American Schooling."
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Freeman, Judy. Libraries Unlimited 2007. "ONCE UPON A TIME: Storytelling, Creative Dramatics, & Reader's Theater for Grades PreK-6."
www.judyreadsbooks.com/onceuponatime.html



Works Cited

- Gardner, Howard. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.
- *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1993.
- Greene, Maxine. *Releasing the Imagination. Essays on Education, the Arts and Social Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.
- Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education*. Ed. Elliot W. Eisner and Michael Day. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association, 2004.
- Huckabee, Governor Mike and Paige, Rod. *Commentary: Putting Arts Education Front and Center*. Education Week, January 26, 2005.
- Jacobs M.Ed., Michael. *Thesis: Drama Discovery*. Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA, 2005.
- Jensen, Eric. *Arts With the Brain in Mind*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2001.
- Jones, Gai. *Raising the Curtain*. Logan, Iowa: Perfection Learning, 2005.
- Little, Judith Warren. *Teachers Caught in the Action—Professional Development That Matters*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 2001.
- The National Council of Teachers of English. *NCTE Guideline—Informal Classroom Drama*. Article 107608, 1982. www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/profcon/107608.htm
- "National Education Association—Curtain Call: How NCLB is Dimming the Lights on the Arts and Other Subjects" *NEA Today*. 21. (Nov. 2004)
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. *The Impact of Arts Education On Workforce Preparation*. 2002. Retrieved 15 Nov. 2004 <<http://www.nga.org/center/divisions>>.
- National Research Council. Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning. *How People Learn: Brain, Mind Experience, and School*. Ed. J. Bransford, Brown, and R. Cocking. Washington: National Academy Press, 2000.
- Palmer, Parker J. *The Courage to Teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1998.
- Pearce, Joseph Chilton. *Evolution's End: Claiming the Potential of Our Intelligence*. San Francisco: Harper Collins Publisher, 1992.
- Professional Development in Pursuit of School Reform*. Ed. Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller. San Francisco: West Publishing Company, 2001.
- A Profile of SAT Program Test Takers*. Princeton: The College Board, 1995.
- School: The Story of American Public Education*. Ed. Sarah Mondale and Sarah Patton. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001.
- Stigler, James W. and James Hiebert. *The Teaching Gap—Best Ideas from the World's Teachers for Improving Education in the Classroom*. New York: The Free Press, 1999.
- Tartar, Sibel. *ERIC DIGEST Dramatic Activities in Language Arts Classrooms: Resource Summary*. EDO-CS-02-05 November 2002.
- United States. Department of Education. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. By Jeanie Jackson and Nancy Prince. 1997. Ed. Richard, J. Deasy. Washington: GPO, 2002
- United States Government. *No Child Left Behind*. Washington: GPO 2002. Retrieved on 30 Apr. 2006 <<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>>.
- University of California. *Department of History Digital Archives. 1999-2004*. Retrieved 30 Dec. 2004 <<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/uchistory>>.
- Woodworth, K. R., Gallagher, H.A., & Guha, R. *An Unfinished Canvas—Arts Education in California: Taking Stock of Policies and Practices. Summary Report*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International, 2006.
- Yale School of Drama. *School of Drama History*. 2003. Retrieved 30 Dec. 2004 <<http://www.yale.edu/drama/about/history.html>>.



