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Book Chapter:

**The Unfinished and Ongoing Business of Art Education in the US:
Community, Democracy, and Global Civil Society**

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The Unfinished and Ongoing Business of Art Education in the US: Community, Democracy, and Global Civil Society

In recent decades the arts have received increasing prominence in public and educational discourses in the United States. One of the reasons is the growing entrenchment of market-driven educational reform initiatives focusing on high-stakes standardized testing of basic skills in promoting global competitiveness. Alongside this business model of education, an inquiry surrounding the effects of the arts on student achievement has emerged, positioning *creativity* as an economic imperative and as a required skill for 21st-century learners as creative future workers. With economic arguments so well positioned to shape education in the US, it is within this context that educators have long called for an art education that facilitates contemporary understandings of the complexities of art and culture in relation to how human experiences are situated in civil society.¹ This focus is particularly critical as it links learning being both about preparing for the future and engaging fully in present time. Additionally, the arts provide opportunities for personal growth, social progress, and the development of global communities through art education. The economic policies also suggest an urgency to understand how knowledge is constructed and shaped within a meaningful context while forging ahead in a complex world of uncertainty. Debates about the purposes of education in an era of rapid technological, political, and socioeconomic change urge us to ponder the role that the arts play in connecting art learning with democratic practice that enable the fulfillment and improvement of lived experiences. Current conditions may motivate us to reconceptualize and describe young people's arts learning experiences in a world where adaptation to meet the shifting demands of society is ongoing, and to consider how social institutions may embrace innovative models of teaching and learning to foster a thriving democracy through the arts.

An orientation to art education as socially engaged, community oriented, and globally connected is currently taking form in schools, communities, and universities throughout the world, including but not limited to service learning, civic engagement, school community collaboration, and social activism (Blandy, 2004; Delacruz, 2009; Hutzel, 2007; Lin & Bruce, 2013). To chart a progressive and democratic agenda that aligns inquiry through the arts, this chapter aims to provide insight into the

conceptualization, implementation, and observation of such art education practices in three particular sites of teaching and learning community. Together we draw from our experiences in art teacher education as well as school and community art education in bringing the interplay of the arts and education in promoting democracy to the foreground. We turn to John Dewey's work to navigate research and practice that focus on understanding the possibilities for teaching and learning in the arts. Dewey's writings on education, art, morality, and democracy provide a useful framework for revisiting, reimagining, and redefining the roles of art education in an increasingly globalized world. We retrieve Dewey's scholarship from our time in an attempt to search for art's relation to life in a contemporary context, recapitulate the profession of art education's progressive and democratic agenda, and reposition this agenda in alignment with a framework that fosters notions of global citizenship. This chapter starts with a discussion of understanding and fostering contemporary democratic practices through the arts that is mainly situated in the works of Dewey, followed by a discussion that examines the relationship of globalization and creativity in the preparation of professional teachers in art education. Next it describes a case study of how the Kennedy Heights Arts Center (KHAC) in Cincinnati, Ohio utilized art to develop sustainable livelihood based on the strengths, assets, and capacities of its members, followed by a reflective narrative from an experienced secondary art teacher who approaches art education as an area of inquiry into students' artistic skills development and community connectedness.

Envisioning Contemporary Democratic Practices through the Arts

It is the place of art-life-democracy nexus in the practice of art education which enables us to call for Dewey's contemporary relevance. Since democracy is at the heart of his philosophy of education, Dewey's insights shed light on the reinterpretations of contemporary art education practices and their relevance for expanding our views of education and learning. Today what we mean by *life* is constantly shaped by unprecedented socio-economic, cultural, environmental, and political reorganizations on both global and local scales. Because it is increasingly recognized around the globe that linking creativity with learning sparks innovation, which in turn may boost competitiveness and enhance economic growth, public discussion about definitions,

forms, and productions of creativity are more prevalent than ever. In this view, creativity is seen as a means to an end in which learning is reduced to a formulaic competence preparation for life from which individuals and society may benefit. While the economic rationale marks a shift in refashioning traditional notions of creativity (Zimmerman, 2009), we view learning in and through the arts as emergent, dynamic, and communal. As early as 1938, in *Experience and Education*, Dewey criticized the confusion between means and ends in education, one by which educators overemphasize the predetermined ends of learning achievements and ignore the significance of the learning experience in and of itself. Dewey's view implies that the relationship between creativity and learning should engage students fully at the moment they learn in order to foster various forms of lived experience in which well being of the self and other individuals are enriched.

Educating individuals through the arts has a long history grounded in Dewey's vision that individuality functions through "the creation, perpetuation, and further development of an environment, of relations to the wills of others" (Dewey, 1969b, p. 314). Art educator Sullivan (2012) argued that arts practice is not only considered as "a set of relational approaches to issues and ideas, but also serves as a form of transformative inquiry" (p. 23). By transforming practices for personal growth, cultural understanding, social progress, and the development of global communities, artistic inquiry is imbued with social relations, as well as attending to real-life issues within learning communities. Individuals are affected by others, whether or not we recognize those effects; we acknowledge and negotiate differences in such a way that points of connection emerge.

"Instruction in the art of life," said Dewey, "is a matter of communication and participation in values of life by means of the imagination, and works of art the most intimate and energetic means of aiding individuals to share in the arts of living" (Dewey, 1987, p. 339). Dewey's notion of *the arts of living* is social, and is fully developed in the realization of democracy as a "mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (Dewey, 1916, p. 87). Dewey's ideal of democracy is comprised of a full spectrum of the human experience, which is also the essence of Dewey's perception of art. For Dewey, searching for continuity of art and ordinary experience is to seek out "factors and forces that favor the normal development of common human activities into

matters of artistic value” (Dewey, 1987, p. 17). Thus, works of art help serve to “idealize qualities found in common experience” (Dewey, 1987, p. 17). To overcome the fragmentation of everyday life, Dewey (1987) suggested that works of art impart “experience in its integrity” (p. 278) that enable to evoke a sense of “belonging to the larger, all-inclusive, whole which is the universe in which we live” (Dewey, 1987, p. 199).

Dewey’s “democratic ethical life,” as Axel Honneth (1998) pinpointed, is “the outcome of the experience that all members of the society could have if they related to one another cooperatively through a just organizing of the division of labor” (p. 780). Thus, Dewey’s insight of sustainable democracy requires the embodiment of a collective ethos that highlights the coexistence of human beings in public space, seeing the “democratic society as cooperative undertaking of interrelated efforts to advance the common good” (Campbell, 1995, p. 12). The significance of Dewey’s theory of art lies in the art’s potential for advancing the common good. By situating art at the heart of social relations, artistic and moral values are intrinsically intersected in his vision of artful life through imagination. The “imaginative experience,” Dewey asserted, “proceeds the liberty and unity power of art” (Dewey, 1987, p. 351), allowing individuals to connect with others and engage in possibilities. Through the arts, a contemporary take on Dewey’s democratic ethos can be enhanced through shared experiences with others in exercising civic imagination. That is, art engages our moral imagination that permits individuals to communicate or participate in the public sphere for collective social change, or as Dewey put it, “art has been the means of keeping alive the sense of purposes that outrun evidence and of meanings that transcend indurated habit” (Dewey, 1987, p. 350). By extension, art education is then seen as a “social instrument for improving people’s lives” (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005, p. xxiii), promoting community engagement, confronting power and facilitating social change.

As much as art constitutes a model of social cooperation for impact, Suzanne Lacy (2010) reminded us that “art is in part about assuming responsibility for one’s performance” (p. 230). As such, the significance of art education lies in embracing a wide array of pedagogical approaches that must address conditions of power as much as they do politics and aesthetics, in order to attend to growth through “the influence of collective

culture upon creation and enjoyment of works of art” (Dewey, 1987, p. 335). Such growth is harmonized through “the development of each individual with the maintenance of a social state in which the activities of the one will constitute to the good of all the others” (Dewey, 1985, p. 350). If democratic practice is a creative act, art is more than just a product but “an aspect of a larger sociocultural agenda” (Lacy, 1995, p. 46). Art education thus helps cultivate the performative role of individuals under a realization of individuality that moves beyond isolation or separation from others but is seen as “the performing of a special service without which the social whole is defective” (Dewey, 1969b, p. 326). In response to the shifting demands of society, art education has a role to engage in expanded models of teaching and learning to produce new forms of language, interface, and pedagogy with the self and the public. This is because the active discourse around the values of arts and culture practices in present time positions the arts on its pedagogical, collaborative and participatory nature to make us ponder what it means when art merges with life in contemporary contexts. As Dewey suggested, the politics of art entails “the values that lead to production and intelligent enjoyment of art have to be incorporated into the system of social relationships” (Dewey, 1987, p. 346-347), we now turn to our practical insight to describe how long-established progressive education ideas and concepts are demonstrated in contemporary art education practices in three particular sites of teaching and learning community: university teacher education, community, and school.

Democratization Practices in Art Educator Teacher Preparation

Drawing from years of experiences as an art teacher educator in the United States, in this section we offer observations and suggestions for preparing future art teachers in teacher education programs in the United States. In recent decades, research and practice in creativity have attracted renewed attention from researchers, educators, business leaders, policy makers and the general public (Chan & Thomas, 2013). Models of and approaches to creativity are being explored, re-imagined and re-configured by practitioners from a wide range of disciplines because of an economic rationale. If, as Lacy (1995) argued, the democratic practice is a creative act, it should be pointed out that creative achievement involves knowledge, control, and discipline combined with the freedom and confidence to experiment.

While many countries have adopted educational standards that nurture creative and critical thinking with the aim of supporting a growing global economy, there is a parallel need to maintain an educational focus on distinctive cultural identities to neutralize the potentially negative impacts of globalization. As Friedman (2000) suggested, globalization impacts our lives because it is “driven both by enormously powerful human aspirations for higher standards of living and by enormously powerful technologies which are integrating us more and more every day” (p. 407). Understanding the relationship of globalization and creativity helps to inform our conceptualizations and pedagogies about global citizenship and what that means for art education as a form of democratic practices. In this line of thinking, art educators and their students must develop content knowledge and skills within an educational community that supports “investigation, cooperation, connection, integration, and synthesis” (Livingston, 2010, p.59). Creativity is essential to build such a community and when creativity becomes a culturally pervasive goal then problem solving becomes the driving pedagogy. More importantly, the relational understanding of creativity, critical thinking, and culture consistently emerges as foundational in the future preparation of art teachers and educators.

In the United States some of the confusion surrounding the definition of creativity in the art classroom has evolved from differing perspectives in higher education, which encourage creative thinking in the fine arts studio, but generally associate creative problem-solving with design education programs. According to Stewart (2006) “design and creativity are natural partners” (p. 116). Creative designers, who are in demand as creative workers, not only heighten the appeal and quality of consumable goods, but to solve environmental or social problems impacting the quality of life in entire communities. Following British art educator Steers (2009), who suggested that 21st-century education demands a radical shift in teacher education that favors inter-cultural and inter-disciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, art educators must continue to highlight the impact creative designers and artists are making on the world and renew efforts to teach creative thinking skills that are domain specific, but also increase students’ ability to make cross-disciplinary connections.

Although there is a renewed global emphasis on creativity and creative industries,

there is little evidence to suggest that visual art education is receiving more emphasis in schools. We may ask: what is the role of future art teachers in helping young people make sense of creativity, as well as sharpening the relationship between creativity and learning? Art teachers and educators have the responsibilities to provide students with a wide range of creative thinking strategies through the arts, and teach for the transfer of creative thinking skills to other disciplines and everyday experience. Based on emerging national and international policies reflecting the skills and values important in a 21st-century education, art teacher educators in higher education must prepare art teacher candidates to see themselves as members and assets of communities that reach well beyond the walls of the classroom, as well as to use thinking strategies like brainstorming, visual analogies, and metaphors that can be practiced in the art classroom and utilized in other contexts (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005).

Whether extending the art class into the local neighborhood or into neighborhoods on the other side of the world, art teachers and students need to consider their relationship to their communities and ways in which they might make positive contributions. Through the international networks, art educators generate opportunities for their students to exchange works of art, learn about other nations and cultures, and meet students with different experiences.² As art education aims to encourage more positive interactions between art and society, teacher educators must prepare art teacher candidates for building sustainable local and international communities by: 1) recognizing and grappling with the complex realities of citizenship in a global society; 2) valuing, respecting and appreciating diversity among students and developing teaching strategies appropriate for students from/in a wide variety of cultures; 3) structuring and engaging in collaborative projects across disciplines and/or connecting with community agencies in contexts beyond the classroom through the uses of virtual or physical space; 4) developing explicit understandings of creativity and teaching strategies for nurturing creative thinking skills within the domain of art that can be transferred to daily life, other disciplines, or contexts; and 5) including design education and ethical dimensions of problem solving within the curriculum. As students develop a greater appreciation for visual culture, design education offers an avenue for cross-disciplinary learning, as well as opportunities to consider personal aesthetics and collective needs in society. Sympathetic critique and

dialogue become critical skills for teacher candidates since teachers have the responsibility to help students become aware of their artistic process and recognize their roles as both producer and perceiver.

Whether the goals for creativity in society are to solve economic problems, seek scientific breakthrough discoveries, or develop artistic potential to the fullest, creative thinking is an essential force in collective human life. Specifically, in places where freedom of expression, important in the development of original thought is repressed, human rights and artistic freedom must be honored and advocated. Ethics, as well as aesthetics, must remain a part of art education research and classroom discussions regarding the role of creativity to avoid presumptions of dominant values, globalization, and standardization. In addition, collaborative international, national and local projects among educators in higher education and P-12 education must become more commonplace. Understanding and developing sensitivity to the role creativity and creative problem solving play in the lives and consciousness of people across a variety of cultures and locations will be necessary to foster global citizenship and achieve sustainability of life.

The Kennedy Heights Arts Center as a Community Site of Public Pedagogy

Community sites provide a significant opportunity to engage diverse groups of people in progressive forms of public pedagogy (Giroux, 2004). While literature on public pedagogy provides an expansive range of definitions, most succinctly, public pedagogy signifies the concept “that schools are not the sole sites of teaching, learning, or curricula, and that perhaps they are not even the most influential” (Sandlin, Schultz & Burdick, 2010, p. 2). According to community development literature, the arts are significant to neighborhood planning, increased local economic growth, and the development of social capital in a community (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Green and Haines, 2002; Putnam, 2000). Additionally, the arts, artists, and children have been described as important assets to recognize in neighborhood planning initiatives (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Green and Haines, 2002); and arguments for the economic and social impacts of the arts have been made for many years (Belfiore & Bennett, 2008). In this section, the Kennedy Heights Arts Center (KHAC) in Cincinnati, Ohio serves as a case study illuminating a public pedagogy that utilizes art to build upon

cultural assets of a neighborhood toward economic and social development, recognizing neighborhood children and adults as *having* culture that is both valuable and significant.

Imagine children walking around their city neighborhood, sketchbooks or cameras in hand, maps (or geomaps) open, looking at their surroundings with a renewed sense of purpose, creating a picturesque map of the portion of the neighborhood where they walked. Picture small groups of children eating lunch in the home of a local neighborhood artist, touring her studio, and discussing her work. Or children scripting and performing a video inside an historical neighborhood home that had once housed a funeral parlor and was designed and built many years ago by the city's then-mayor. These forms of public pedagogy have occurred with middle school-aged children at the Kennedy Heights Arts Center's community-based summer art program. Envisioned and developed by Jim Z., a founding board member of the KHAC, this community-based curriculum was co-constructed by groups of local experts and interested neighbors to engage children and recognize them as assets in their neighborhood. Profoundly, the KHAC was founded by interested citizens when the building was slated to be bulldozed and replaced by a storage facility. Forty residents came together and each contributed \$1000 toward the purchase of the building with the shared vision to convert it into a community arts center. Within the first five years, the volunteer Board of Directors developed a community gallery space, an artists' guild, and the summer educational program for middle school students.

Kennedy Heights and its surrounding neighborhoods are home to children attending schools all over the city since the previous neighborhood school had closed down. The school choice movement that is common in many urban school districts, while providing families options for educating their children, has also resulted in decreased sense of community among neighborhood children (Chaltain, 2014). Since its founding, the KHAC has stepped in to become a center of this community, the effects of which has heightened the sense of community of participating children and their parents, according to evaluation data. The KHAC summer program has educated middle school children from Kennedy Heights and its surrounding communities since 2006, utilizing a community engaged art curriculum focused on community assets. Evaluation data from

2006 and 2007 have provided evidence of an increased sense of community and neighborhood pride not only in the children, but in their parents as well.

Unlike many public schools in the United States today, with emphasis on passing state tests leading to the elimination of recess and closed campus policies, the KHAC, as a community arts center, looks to the neighborhood community as a site for learning and engagement. The summer program curriculum was founded on a public pedagogical approach and place-based learning focused on local assets. In teams lead by a teaching artist, children are emerged in the neighborhood identifying buildings, people, environmental resources, and remnants of the past toward artsmaking, their learning about the neighborhood encapsulated into performances and exhibitions of collaborative art.

Community as School Art Curriculum

This section presents a reflection on art teaching experience from one of the coauthors, Bill Blidy. In his own voice, Bill describes how community as the curriculum for teaching and learning art helps students engage in an expanded realm of artistic practices, as well as how social support around the community help cultivate learning experience as a whole.

I (Bill) have taught visual art at Newark Community High School for fifteen years. Newark, Illinois is a rural, Midwestern town with a total population of less than 1,000, mostly Caucasians, whose common industries are construction and agriculture. With fewer than 200 students, Newark is the only high school in this district and the school has a reputation for integrating service learning into the school-wide curriculum. Many of the school's departments, particularly the fine arts, social sciences, and agricultural program have very close ties with the community, and a rich history of integrating curriculum with community engagement.

My curriculum seeks to educate students in the following skills: teaching art as technical skill, creative problem solving, thoughtful observation, and exploration of surroundings and the community around oneself, as well as actual interaction with the various institutions and communities of which they are a part. Over my years of teaching at Newark, I have organically developed three different types of projects, all of which teach these skills: individual, collaborative, and community-responsive.

The first type, individual projects, includes those projects that begin by skill building exercises that lead to a final artwork that involves a personal choice. The best example of the first type of project is the Art I Final Pencil Drawing. It is similar to many high school projects that you can find at any juried art competition, in that it mines the memories and personal experience of the high school students and attempts to engage the student this way in skills-based assignments with a personal connection. This is the longest and most intense project of a year-long course, where the student artist spends two months on a very enlarged grid drawing of a family photograph.

I initially thought of the assignment as a simple skills application project. However, the way the drawing has functioned in my program, the importance of it, and the ramification of it on the families of my students has surprised me. These drawings carry weight and meaning, in some cases becoming new semi-sacred family objects. Photos are communally sorted through by parents and students. A family memory, a communal event, sometimes spanning generations, is literally elevated and changed for that family through the drawing. Parents are consistently surprised by the achievements of their students and it changes their perceptions of their children's skills. The drawing is often framed and becomes a part of the treasured artwork of the home. I believe students take my classes partially because of the way these drawings are functioning in that primary social institution, the family.

My second type of project, collaborative, is that which relies on intra-class or intra-school collaborations. These are art projects where students work together within a class or across disciplines. The authority is still the school faculty and the final evaluation is a grade. Additionally, the collaboration primarily benefits the school. Examples of this are: painted murals within the school, artwork that supports the school play (program covers and T-shirts), group tile projects (creating low relief sculptural tiles in close collaboration with their peers to make a larger piece of art), and video public service announcements where the students act and help film one another's videos. The video public service announcements have been especially successful in the classroom. The students first study the form and examples of PSAs. They then develop their own message, a message they personally connect with. This can be a personal, local community or national problem. They develop a storyboard that addresses the problem.

Next, they voluntarily collaborate with other students for help in shooting the video. Sometimes they need a camera held; often they need actors or voice-overs. They learn the technical skill of editing and shooting a video, while observing their community and forming a response to it and collaborating with their peers.

The third type of project, community-responsive, comprises those opportunities which allow art students to be involved with the community, experience civic pride, and/or learn about the experience of creating commissioned artwork. Students interface with community members and committees through the art show, commission or contest. In these projects, the community members and committees take on an authoritative role in the project, with the teacher acting as guide. Often times these art projects involve intense historical research of the community. Community-responsive projects are chances for students to be generous with their skills and give artwork to their community. Examples of this type of projects include creating paintings for a local restaurant, the Advanced Studio Art Opening at the local library, a large-scale mural depicting community history, annual “Dare Day” posters for the police department, and button designs for the village’s annual Fourth of July celebration.

The button design project for the Graphic Design class is another project that has an unexpectedly rich and deep impact on both students and community. The small community of Newark, having recently celebrated its 175th year anniversary, comes together annually for a special weeklong celebration of Independence Day. Festivities include the annual fire department water fights, concessions, street dance, community picnic, kids’ crafts, book sale, music, bingo, antique tractor show, silent auction and raffle, parade, fireworks, and the highly anticipated button drawing. Work on this button design begins in the early spring semester, based on an annual theme. While the buttons are physically small, only 3 inches in diameter, they hold substantial meaning for this community and become a yearly collectible from the village’s July 4th festival. In fact, several community members have been collecting July 4th buttons consecutively for over thirty years, and proudly display them in elaborately designed frames. Since each button is individually numbered, many participants claim ownership of a particular “lucky” number, and reserve their number well in advance of the festivities. The button is chosen by several volunteer members of the “Newark Button Committee” and the winning

design is printed on one thousand buttons. In addition, the design is displayed permanently in the local museum and the winner and his/her button are featured in the local newspaper. Additional designs, not selected for the button, have become a Boy Scout patch or even the village flag. All of the designs are displayed at school, and several are chosen for display on the school's website.

At the conclusion of the project, all students reflect on the experience of submitting a design to the village for consideration, and answer questions such as: "In what ways have your identity, your values, your sense of community, your willingness to volunteer, and your self-confidence been impacted or altered through this experience? What have you learned about the community of Newark as a result?" and "Does this experience complement or contrast with what you're learning in class? How?"

Art, through its rendering of image and symbol, is in its very essence communal. Image and symbol are received and interpreted in the community in which they are displayed, and both convey meaning from the artist and accrue meaning through the viewer. Technical art skills are consistently taught in my program along with personal or collective issues students care about. Often it surprises students that they can do this, that they themselves can be artists, thus, that we are all artists. However, the ability to render the world is merely as useful as the exploration, study and observation, and then interpretation of that world in a meaningful, true and/or beautiful way. We seek truth and beauty about the world through art. Ultimately, we do this with one another and for one another. Underlying my art curriculum is the interconnected social support from the school community in developing and strengthening students' artistic skills and concepts. When community is the curriculum, learning is embedded in lived experience and supported from home, school and the entire community. Anderson & Milbrandt (2005) observed that such a whole community approach to art education requires "a sense of shared goals, mutual trust, communal knowledge, and understanding of the values of art for life" (p. 31), which is the educational vision I have strived to achieve.

While envisioning the term *artist*, we think of professional artists who earn their living through making art, having the inner drive for creation and self-expression. Art is more democratic than that. We can all be artists and with education, we are all artists who search for meanings in life. I teach not only the skill sets to every student who takes my

classes, but I teach them to collaborate with one another and the community, to observe the world around them closely, to creatively respond to it and creatively solve the problems which naturally occur as they work on a project in detail.

Conclusion

Responding to Dewey's vision of social institutions as public spaces for participatory democracy, three ways of conceptualizing our research and practice in schools, institutions of higher education, and community settings highlight the plurality of arts learning experience. Examining these three contexts also expands understandings of art education beyond simplistic views of product and process, and promotes an engagement that allows learners to recognize the power and responsibilities they may have to transform social life. Along with their uniqueness, these three particular sites of teaching and learning share similarities that call attention to inquiry into communal thinking and action. This vision of art education aims to create a dialogic space in which members of community can contribute to public concerns as well as ensuring that learning is shaped by a sense of public engagement and occurs over a continuum of problem-solving processes (Cooke, 2006; Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970; Gutiérrez, 2008). The word *community* signals social support for collaborative activities and knowledge creation connected to members' lived experiences; *inquiry* points to the nature of learning that supports participatory engagement in promoting democracy and social change. Together the three sites of school, higher education, and community show teaching and learning in the arts are seen as complex, embedded in lived experience; related to other disciplines, thematic, and problem-centered; curriculum structure is fluid, intertwined, and organized around real-world situations.

In the context of current social and economic climates, in accordance with Dewey's vision, situating everyday lived experience in the intersection of the arts and education becomes a methodology to explore new modes of social encounters that "provide models through which we can experience the world in new ways" (Eisner, 2002, p. 19). Specifically, possibilities for teaching and learning in the arts have been expanded from traditional studio arts practice to call for cross-disciplinary knowledge construction and sharing through experimentation, creative thinking, collaboration, participation, and conversation that can occur within the classroom or in international contexts. Eisner

(2004) reminded us that “the experience the arts make possible is not restricted to what we call the fine arts” (p. 9). In a sense, realizing the experience of art as methodologies highlights the potential of expanded notions of the arts as a means of democratic participation for navigating and interpreting contemporary social phenomena. Artistic thinking and creative problem-solving are ways of using cross disciplinary knowledge for addressing real issues positioned in local and global communities. For Dewey, art and democracy both are to be manifested through social cooperation. By focusing on how the experience of art as methodologies transcends lived experience, rather than simply representing experience, art serves as a means to realize Dewey’s vision of democracy as a *mode of associated living* for fostering contemporary democratic practices. It is the unfinished and ongoing business of art education to revitalize the interdependence between individual capabilities and their environment to support functional relationships between art and life. Even though Dewey’s 1939 essay *Creative Democracy: The Task before Us* seems to have been written very long ago, pragmatic philosopher Richard Bernstein (2010) reminded us “creative democracy is still the task before us” (p. 88). All art educators must undertake the task of re-imagining the cultivation of democratic citizenship through arts in schools, institutions of higher education, and communities locally and globally.

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¹ Civil society is broadly defined as the sphere of non-governmental organizations and institutions where people associate to advance common good (Delacruz, 2009).

² Examples of international professional art education networks are: the Kids Guernica <http://kids-guernica.blogspot.com/>; the International Education and Resource Network (iearn) <http://iearn.org/>; International Society for Arts Education (InSEA) <http://www.insea.org/>; and International Paintpals, <http://www.paintpals.org/>. In addition, Reservoir Studio (<http://sites.psu.edu/reservoirstudio/>) is an example of transdisciplinary collaboration where art educators can become involved in international service projects.