

*The North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts is a consortium of six school districts, five museums, two arts councils, two state agencies, and the University of North Texas which is committed to improving visual arts education for elementary children and developing audiences for the rich museum resources of the Dallas/Fort Worth/Denton metroplex. The primary purpose of the consortium is to do staff development for and implementation of discipline-based art education (DBAE) in K-6 classrooms.*

# An Experiment in School/Museum/University Collaboration

In 1986 the University of North Texas (UNT) assumed the leadership in responding to an RFP from the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, an operating unit of the J. Paul Getty Trust, to form a consortium to address the improvement of instruction in the visual arts in the schools of the North Texas region. With strong traditions of excellence in the arts and arts education and a commitment to outreach and public service, UNT invited museums, school districts and local and state arts agencies to join them in the effort. Using an approach to teaching the visual arts known as discipline-based art education (DBAE), the Getty Center had conducted a seven year experiment in the Los Angeles area and was eager for others in various parts of the country to explore issues related to staff development and implementation of DBAE.

DBAE centers focus the learning of works of art by integrating content from four foundational art disciplines that contribute to the creation, understanding and appreciation of art: art production, art history, art criticism and aesthetics. This emphasis on teaching the content of the arts is more comprehensive than the traditional production-centered methods of arts education which exists in many public school classrooms.

DBAE emphasizes the importance of instruction in the visual arts as a part of the general education of every child and encourages the study of works of art from both western and non-western cultures. It also gives attention to the importance of working from a written curriculum and understanding how learning in the visual arts parallels learning in many other disciplines. DBAE includes systematic evaluation of student learning. To educate youngsters in

the arts in this way requires extensive staff development as well as technical assistance during the implementation process.

## Initial Planning

Toward this end, the North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts (NTIEVA) was formed. Originally the consortium consisted of four museums (Amon Carter Museum, Dallas Museum of Art, Kimbell Art Museum, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth); six school districts (Dallas ISD, Denton ISD, Fort Worth ISD, Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD, Pilot Point ISD, Plano ISD), the Greater Denton Arts Council, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and the University of North Texas. Later the Meadows Museum at Southern Methodist University and the Arts Council of Fort Worth and Tarrant County joined the consortium. A solid foundation for the formation of the consortium existed because of the interactions that the long-established visual arts programs at UNT had had with area museums and arts agencies in the area and throughout the state. Likewise, the School of Visual Arts and the University have also had excellent working relationships with area school districts for many years.

With a small planning grant from the Getty Center, the consortium member institutions each designated representatives to participate in a planning process. The group, with a common concern about the quality of education in the arts for children and the development of audiences for the rich cultural resources of the Dallas/Fort Worth/Denton metroplex, solidified quickly and began to assess in detail the available resources in the metroplex and the commitment of various groups toward working together to improve, enhance, and in some cases initiate visual arts programs for K-6 children in the six consortium member public school districts.

The districts were carefully chosen to represent the diverse school populations and types of districts which exist in the metroplex, allowing for many research opportunities. The two large urban districts in the metroplex (Dallas and Fort Worth) were included as were two suburban districts (Hurst-Euless-Bedford and Plano). Denton is a smaller, university community and Pilot Point is a small rural district located approximately 20 miles north of Denton. Both Denton and Pilot Point are being affected greatly by the rapid growth of the metroplex to the north. In addition to diverse student populations, the districts also represented various commitments to art education programs and different staffing patterns for art instruction, again allowing many opportunities for research by UNT graduate students in art education and the Institute staff.

After a year of assessment and planning, the consortium group was committed to undertaking a major research and development effort in staff development and implementation of a DBAE program in grades K-6 which would fully utilize the rich visual resources available in the metroplex and hopefully secure a place for an education in the visual arts as an essential part of every child's general education. A five-year implementation proposal was submitted and was one of six funded by the Getty Center with a \$625,000 matching grant.

## The Institute

NTIEVA officially began operation on January 1, 1990. With strong initial support from the University of North Texas and the University of North Texas Foundation, the consortium has been successful in exceeding the requirements of the

Getty Center by raising more than \$500,000 in matching funds from state and local agencies, local foundations, charitable trusts, and individuals to insure that the full five-year effort would be completed. Consortium member institutions have also been generous in providing both cash and in-kind support for the activities of the Institute.

**Staffing:** Two UNT faculty/administrators serve as co-directors in addition to their regular teaching and administrative responsibilities. They are supported by a full-time project coordinator, a full-time administrative assistant, and three half-time graduate research assistants. While it is possible for a number of staff responsibilities to be assumed by regular staff at the consortium member institutions, it is essential to have a core staff whose sole responsibility is the business of the consortium. The art supervisors in each of the six school districts serve as Associate Directors/Site Coordinators in addition to their regular responsibilities. The museum educators have assumed key staff responsibilities particularly in relation to the summer institute and the extended institute/renewal sessions which are conducted throughout the school year.

**Staff Development and Implementation:** The primary work of the institute has been conducting intensive summer educational experiences in DBAE for teams of teachers and administrators from the six consortium member school districts and for docents from the five museums. A school team consists of both classroom and art specialist teachers as well as the principal. Utilizing both UNT faculty, museum personnel and visiting consultants, institute participants participate in intensive experiences in the four subdisciplines of the visual arts - aesthetics, art history, art criticism, and art production - within the museum setting. They also spend considerable time in translating these experiences into meaningful educational opportunities and experiences for their students. Following the summer institutes the school personnel work on DBAE implementation in their classrooms with technical assistance available from both the Institute staff and the museum educators.

**Advocacy:** From the very beginning, it was recognized that the leadership of the consortium member institutions must "buy into" the concept if it was going to work. The University chancellor hosted an executive briefing for the leadership of the consortium member institutions, noting the importance of the project and the potential impact that it could have on the educational and cultural life of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex.

Advocacy has continued to play a major role in the success of the consortium and its endeavors, because of the constantly changing cast of players on the boards of educational and cultural organizations as well as constant changes in leadership positions which had not been anticipated. During the four-year period that the project has been underway, superintendents in each of the six school districts have changed; in two of the districts there have been two changes in superintendents. In the five museums, three directorships have changed as has the leadership in one of the community arts agencies.

The most stable groups in the consortium member institutions have been the middle managers. No changes have occurred among the art supervisors in the school districts and only one change each among the museum educators and the university faculty involved in the project. With each change in administrative leadership or board membership, the consortium has the responsibility of presenting its goals and objectives to yet another individual and enlisting the continuing support of the con-

sortium member institution. Continuing support of the leadership of the consortium member institutions is very important to the success of any collaborative effort and will necessarily consume a considerable amount of the administrative time and effort of the consortium member leaders.

**Funding:** Raising matching funds for a consortium effort has also presented some interesting opportunities and challenges. Since most of the consortium member institutions have their own development agendas, it is important that the fund-raising efforts of the consortium be very carefully orchestrated. The ideal situation is when various members of the consortium believe in the effort strongly enough that they recommend that their respective funding sources provide support. This occurred with the North Texas Institute in at least two situations. Funding is highly competitive and a consortium effort must be solid and have well articulated goals and objectives to receive extramural support.

Now beginning the fifth and final year of the initial research and development period, NTIEVA has provided in-depth educational experiences in discipline-based art education for more than 600 teachers and administrations in the six consortium member school districts; they, in turn, have had an impact on literally thousands of K-6 children.

## Model Development

Among the most successful outcomes of the consortium's efforts have been the models which have been developed to achieve the optimum in terms of delivering a quality education in the arts. The Institute is testing a collaborative model which involves all key players. (See Figure 1.)

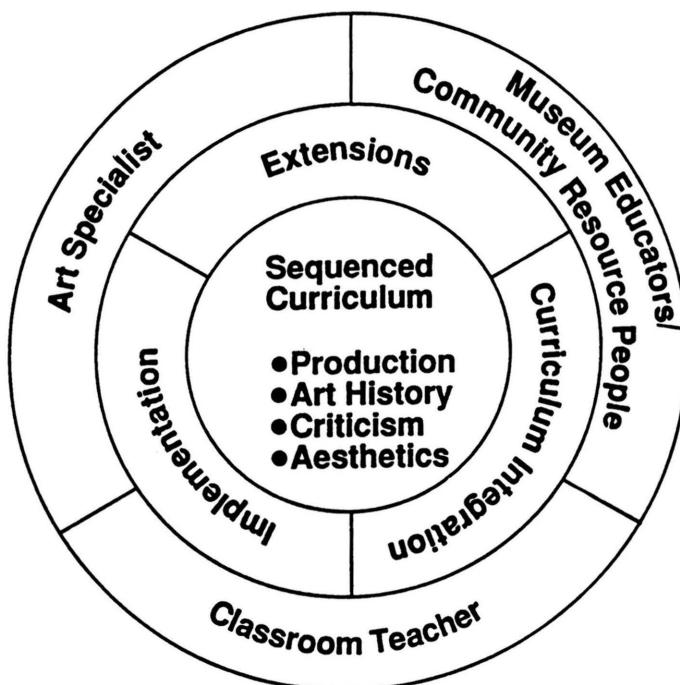


Figure 1

Such a model, when fully implemented, provides the best possible resources and personnel for implementing the highest quality program. Even if only partially implemented, it still insures a solid, basic education in art for each child.

This model proposes that the delivery of the highest quality program in art for the elementary student requires both the classroom teacher and an art specialist teacher working together with a museum educator or community resource people from arts centers or arts councils. Such a model calls for a change in the traditional position of the roles of the art specialist teacher as well as the classroom teacher at the elementary level.

At the core of the model is the goal to deliver a comprehensive, sequential program of instruction. Furthermore, it is based upon the position that beyond the delivery of basic instruction in art (implementation) there are curriculum integrations and curriculum extensions. The delivery of basic instruction (implementation) is a shared responsibility between the classroom teacher and the art specialist, with curriculum integration being the primary responsibility of the classroom teacher and curriculum extensions being the primary responsibility of the art specialist teacher. In fulfilling both of these responsibilities, the classroom teacher and the art specialist teacher works with museum educators and/or community resource people in art centers and arts councils.

In this model, the art specialist, because of his/her more extensive background and expertise in the visual arts, assumes the primary responsibility for establishing the scope and sequence of the curriculum and selecting possible commercial curriculum materials which are used to implement the program. The art specialist also explores and establishes relationships between studio, historical, critical and aesthetic content. In certain specialized areas the art specialist actually delivers the instruction.

The classroom teacher explores the scope and sequence of the curriculum and the selected curriculum materials, paying particular attention to possibilities for the integration of art content with the content of other disciplines. With quality resource materials and the assistance of the art specialist, the classroom teacher assumes responsibility for the delivery of much of the basic instruction in art just as he or she does in math, language arts, or science. Through actual implementation of the basic curriculum, the classroom teacher establishes the content foundation upon which the art specialist builds when he or she delivers those aspects of the curriculum which require more detailed knowledge of and experience in art. The classroom teacher also has the primary responsibility for making the connections and parallels and integrations of the art content with the content of other disciplines, and alerts the art specialist to possibilities for parallel learning and integration of content when the specialist is actually delivering instruction.

Together they identify the necessary teaching learning materials such as visuals, art supplies and the like; they also share in identifying and selecting appropriate curriculum enhancements such as field trips, speakers and artists which assist them in their respective responsibilities for making curriculum parallels and curriculum extensions.

The third essential party in this model is the museum educator or community resource people from art centers or arts councils. These individuals work closely with the art specialist to prepare educational materials which support the curriculum and relate to the community resources available, whether they be museum collections, local architecture, or local artists. They keep the art specialist and the classroom teacher informed of arts activities in the community and suggest ways

that they might relate to the curriculum. They also provide the space and personnel for enrichment programs. Such individuals might also support the visual arts program by identifying and providing volunteers to work with the art specialist and the classroom teachers, and finally, these individuals might assist in raising funds to support the art program.

Such a model capitalizes upon the strengths of the art specialist, the classroom teacher, and the museum educator and community resource people. Clearly each is prepared to do certain unique things that the other cannot readily accomplish.

The model is also flexible in that it can work at the most minimum level, even if art specialists are not a part of the instructional team and provided that there are quality curriculum materials available which are comprehensive and sequenced. In those situations where a school district has only an art consultant/coordinator and no art specialists actually working in the schools, the model can work at a moderate level, with the art consultant/coordinator assuming some of the responsibilities of the art specialist. In virtually every situation there are some community resources available. Of course, the model works at its maximum potential when classroom teachers, art specialists and museum educators are available, along with quality curriculum materials which are comprehensive and sequenced.

The model certainly redefines the role of the art specialist and the classroom teacher in relation to instructional delivery in the visual arts. It extends the role of the art specialist beyond that of instructional delivery and increases the role of the classroom teacher in that domain. Not to be overlooked in such a model is that in those districts where art specialist teachers do not exist, the classroom teacher with the help of well-developed curriculum materials and using available community resources can deliver a basic program of art instruction. In actuality, our experience indicates that need for art specialist teachers is often created once classroom teachers value art instruction.

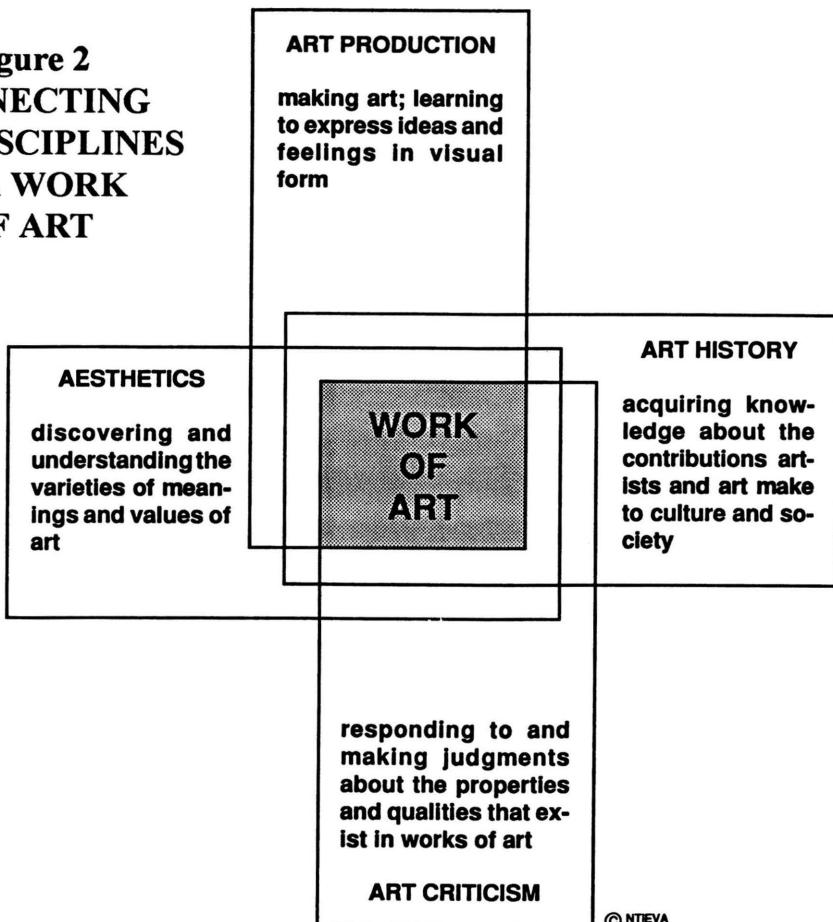
To communicate the importance of an education in the arts and to illustrate the relationships and connection between the four subdisciplines as well as with learning in other disciplines a model has been developed which has been particularly useful in gaining the attention of school decision makers. The model (See Figure 2) provides a visual interpretation of DBAE and also offers use for translation of theory into practice, for exploration or discovery, to investigate questions relating to the four disciplines about the meaning and function of a work of art as well as the relationship of the four disciplines to other disciplines within the curriculum.

In the model, four rectangles, each representing one of the art disciplines, are positioned in a pinwheel formation to overlap and intersect to form a center. The center represents a work of art; each discipline simultaneously overlaps the center and all the other disciplines. The positioning of each discipline is unimportant as all of the disciplines are equal in value.

The focus begins with the central work of art; the image used may be an actual art work, a reproduction, a postcard or a slide. Discussion or inquiry may concern the interrelationships of the four disciplines or concentrate primarily on one.

The model has been used in a number of other applications that are helpful in demonstrating the relationship of DBAE to other curriculum content. In Texas, as in many states, the content of curriculum areas as well as testing for academic achievement has been legislatively mandated. Using the model to show how learning in art relates to learning in other curriculum areas has been successful with both policy makers and practitioners.

**Figure 2**  
**CONNECTING**  
**THE DISCIPLINES**  
**IN A WORK**  
**OF ART**



### Sharing Leadership Responsibilities

While the University has played a key leadership role in the Institute's activities, it is important that all members of the consortium feel that they are equal players in the effort. The tendency is for other institutions to look to the University for the answers. In the North Texas Institute, we have tried to define the University's role as one of facilitator, stepping back and allowing other consortium member institutions to take the lead in many of the activities. For example, a series of extended institute/renewal sessions have been planned for Saturdays throughout the school year. Initially, the University and the NTIEVA staff which is based at the University took the lead in planning and implementing these activities; however, the situation has progressed to the point that these sessions are now largely planned and implemented by the museums and/or the school districts, with the University playing only a supportive role.

The University continues to play a major role in facilitating communication among consortium member institutions. The NTIEVA staff produces a quarterly newsletter which is sent to all former institute participants as well as an extended

mailing list of administrative officials and other interested individuals. This mechanism keeps participants in touch with the activities of the Institute as well as current activities at each of the museums and special activities that are going on within the school districts. Increasingly, efforts are being made to connect people electronically, both for communication purposes as well as for additional educational opportunities in art education.

### **Serendipitous Findings**

Some of the most solidifying elements of the consortium have been the serendipitous opportunities which have arisen as a result of the collaboration among various institutions in the community that have a strong interest in arts education.

A good example is the Study Print Project which was made possible because of a supplemental grant from one of the major funders of the Institute. Responding to the expressed needs of teachers to have high quality reproductions of works in local museums for use in their classrooms, the Institute initiated the development of a Study Print Portfolio, ArtLinks, which includes five reproductions from each of the five consortium member museums. Each reproduction is 18" X 24" and mounted, backed with reference information and laminated for classroom use. The project was coordinated by a University faculty member with the museum educators at each of the five museums selecting the images and preparing the related support materials. Reference material on the back of each reproduction includes information about the artist or culture, subject, cultural context and style, as well as formal, sensory, expressive and technical properties appropriate to the work. Suggested discussion questions were prepared by the museum educators to serve to guide students in higher order thinking skills as they explore art works from many cultures and times. An accompanying teacher's guide is designed to help with lesson planning by offering suggestions for classroom activities, vocabulary lessons, reading lists and cross-referencing for thematic presentations, as well as repeating the reference information on the back of the reproductions.

### **Collaborative Opportunities for Research**

The consortium has also provided many excellent research opportunities for graduate students in art education at UNT. Because of the consortium, these students have ready access to both the public schools and the museums for data collection. Likewise, the consortium has opened up opportunities for collaborative research efforts among graduate students, university faculty, public school personnel and museum personnel.

In addition to the role that the consortium has played in stimulating and facilitating research projects, other collaborative efforts have emerged as a result of the interaction that has gone on among staff at the consortium member institutions. New programs at the University have emerged and new internships for students have evolved.

### **Planning for the Future**

Because of the success of the initial five-year effort, the consortium is now engaged in a long range planning process. The task of strategic planning has been

approached by using a traditional strategic planning model. This model includes the following sequential elements: situational analysis, development of planning assumptions, affirmation of purpose, articulation of vision, statement of mission, development of objectives and methods of measuring accomplishment, development of strategies (alternative means) of achieving objectives, statement of long- and short-range plans, and continuing appraisal and assessment.

Situational analysis was accomplished through two activities. First a telephone survey was conducted among Institute participants, school personnel, museum directors, and such key informants as advisory committee members, funding representatives, community supporters, and university administrators. A total of 182 individuals responded to this survey, which was conducted in June and July 1993 by the Survey Research Laboratory (SRL) at the University of North Texas. This survey also included items dealing with the role of the Institute and with appraisal. A written summary of the survey results was presented to the Planning Council which consists of 40 individuals representing the constituencies and staff of NTIEVA. A full day's meeting of the Planning Council completed the second phase of the situational analysis. This meeting was followed by an evening meeting on the same day and a half-day meeting the following morning of a smaller Planning Committee of 10 members drawn from the Planning Council who handled detailed work and the actual drafting of documents.

Subsequent steps in the planning process are being carried out by the smaller Planning Committee. The planning effort is being guided by a Regents Professor of Public Administration at UNT who is an experienced planner with particular expertise in working with not-for-profit groups and governmental agencies.

The first task was a SWOT analysis, that is, an analysis of the North Texas Institute's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, as well as possible threats to NTIEVA and issues associated with discipline-based art education. A highly structured decision technique known as Nominal Group Technique (NGT), or Nominal Group Process (NGP), was used because of its strengths of focusing on ideas, assuring participation by everyone, and achieving results. Use of NGT resulted in a rank-ordering of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and DBAE issues. All ideas that were generated in the NGT sessions, even those that did not make the final lists, were preserved for use later in the planning process.

NGP was also used to produce a set of assumptions to guide the planning process. The SWOT analysis and development of assumptions were tasks accomplished by the larger group.

The smaller Planning Committee then turned its attention to using the survey results, SWOT analysis, and planning assumptions, as well as some existing documents, to produce statements of purpose, vision, and mission. This work was accomplished by the unstructured process of brainstorming or "greenlighting," as it is sometimes called. Statements of purpose, vision, and mission were drafted. Based upon this work, the Steering Committee formulated a narrative statement that provides a brief description of all programs as well as a more detailed description of a national specialty program.

Following a review of the Mission/Vision by the Getty Center staff, the Planning Committee initiated work on the formulation of specific objectives and strategies to achieve the mission of the Institute, identifying measures to determine if the objectives are met. Following the completion of this effort, timelines and measurements will be specified for each objective.

## Summary

No member of the consortium known as the North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts would make claims that there have not been rough spots and obstacles to overcome in our efforts to improve education in the visual arts for K-6 children in the North Texas area and to develop better educated audiences for the rich museum resources that exist in the area. Probably the most troublesome areas have been

1. the uncertainty of continuous funding in the early stages of the consortium's efforts,
2. not anticipating the major changes that would occur in the leadership of consortium member institutions,
3. the time it took to develop enough trust and mutual respect for representatives of the member institutions to be able openly to discuss and sometimes disagree on various matters, and
4. the time it took to develop a level of comfort among the consortium member institutions so that when one institution took the lead in a particular activity this was viewed as a consortial rather than an individual institutional effort.

While progress has been made in each of these areas, participants must continuously work on the last two of them. One of the most successful techniques for addressing these concerns is to identify a project or activity which demands participation from several institutions and which cannot be accomplished by any one.

Although there have been problems to deal with, each consortium member institution would probably agree that because of our common concern and our combined efforts we have been able to achieve far beyond our original expectations. Membership in a consortium requires a great deal on the part of each member to make the consortium work; at the same time the collaborative efforts often pay dividends far beyond what any single member of the consortium could achieve.

In the words of one of the consortium member leaders, successful membership in a consortium involves making no assumptions, recognizing that one consortium member institution must take the lead on any project, working hard, and then celebrating the successes.

NOTE: The authors acknowledge the contributions of Nancy Walkup Reynolds, Project Coordinator for the North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts, and Dr. Charldean Newell, Regents Professor of Public Administration at the University of North Texas, to the development of this manuscript.

### Suggested Reading

Eisner, Elliot W. *The Role of Discipline-Based Art Education in America's Schools*. Los Angeles, CA: The Getty Center for Education in the Arts, n.d.

Getty Center for Education in the Arts. *Beyond Creating: The Place of Art in America's Schools*. Los Angeles, CA, author, 1985.

Journal of Aesthetic Education, Volume 21, Number 2, Summer 1987.

Loyacono, Laura L. *Reinventing the Wheel: A Design for Student Achievement in the 21st Century*, Washington, D.C.: National Conference of State Legislatures, November 1992.