

A Different Kind of Teacher for Arts IS Education

When my mother went to Wheelock in the late 1920s, primary school teachers were expected to play some piano and be able to help children sing and dance. In the yearbook there is a picture of her playing a jazz drum set in the very small orchestra. It was an era of women's liberation and media had not yet replaced live music; music education specialists had not replaced classroom teachers as transmitters of musicking skills. Actually, I would like to be rid of most media and many professional specialties, but I know that this will take generations of struggle to accomplish. In the meantime, we can try to remove television and computers from the lives of preschool children, we can try to postpone "schooling" until age 6 or 7, we can enlarge and enliven the home-schooling movement with arts integration programs, and we can train more people to *be* arts-integrated like my recently departed and sure to be sainted mom.

We need teacher training colleges or summer institutes that turn out a different kind of pre-K and primary school teacher who knows musicking-dancing skills and cartooning, miming, drama skills. Since this is Ch. 57 in the Section "What Is to Be Done? I leave it to the reader to list the skills for each goal.

Arts integration is one agenda for maximum skills. . . .

Maximum physical activity.

Maximum performance.

Maximum joy. any fun skills that are not on the first three lists.

Arts-*in*-education is another agenda, and it is *only* as good as the arts integration and physical, performance, joy-enhancing skills of the arts-integrated teacher or arts-integrated child mentor. We need to give priority to musicking skills and arts-integration goals, because the "arts-*in*-education" goals can *only* be met if the arts skills are there to do the *incorporating* with, to enliven-embody-empower the other disciplines. The danger with arts-*in*-education is that if you turn 2/4, 3/4, 6/8 and 12/8 into math fractions *before* you learn how to groove in those "time signatures" you kill the arting or crafting process before it can make math groovy! If you do poetry on the page *before* you establish the drumming or jazz improvising skills, then the interlockable timing of the rhyming probably won't happen; a child poet will recite or elocute aloud, but the musicking will be background or ambient, not *in* sync, not *in*-sync-but-out-of-phase, not really *interactive* or an actual exemplar of arts-*in*-education.

Arts IS Education!

before

Arts IN Education

Pat Campbell:

AIE, Arts-in-Education, was a program funded minimally by the National Endowment for the Arts, and depending upon where one lived, possibly by the state arts council as well. It was well-intended but ill-conceived and under-funded, bringing artists into schools for minimal exposure, supporting special assemblies and even everyday curricular infusion in the arts. It's long gone now, and its impact is hardly discernible.

“The arts” in schools is too often a dilution of all the arts, with little focus on any one art, shepherded by a specialist in only one art—typically the music or visual art teacher. What if we whittled it down to music, and turned it from music education, and music in education, to music as education? What then? Maybe a more profound encounter with music in every subject, every step of the way through the school day.

On matters of music-teaching and music-learning, we would do well to heed Zoltan Kodaly’s wisdom on the vital need for maximally-trained musicians with enthusiasm and attitude. “It is much more important who is the singing master than who is the director of the Opera, because a poor director will fail; but a bad teacher may kill the love of music for thirty years in thirty classes of children.” (1974).