

Art Teachers Make a Difference



Art teacher Bob Hepner, engages his students at the elementary laboratory school at Smith College in Amherst, Massachusetts. Photo by Nancy Walkup.

Eldon Katter

As our nation struggles with an unsettling economy, we need to put our best foot forward and promote what we know to be true: Art education makes a difference in people's lives.

Why Do Art Teachers Make a Difference?

Before we thought about being art teachers, we knew, from personal experience, that art makes a positive difference in our lives. We experienced encounters with art as a journey of discovery and mastery of skills. With beginners' minds, we discovered mul-

iple ways to see and create beauty in our world. We remain confident that we are making a difference because of how and what we teach.

How Do Art Teachers Make a Difference?

We make a difference by guiding students in creating, interpreting, and evaluating visual forms. We embark students on a lifelong journey of inquiry and forge multiple pathways for appreciating the natural and human landscape. Along the way, we challenge students with many opportunities to reflect on their journey.

We make a difference by planning meaningful learning experiences that balance formal, expressive, and thematic content. Based on assessments of needs, we map the most effective routes for mastering artistic skills. We identify essential questions and design artful problems that require students to look closely at the world around them, analyze visual qualities, consider traditions of artistic accomplishments, and make informed judgments about the visual forms they encounter every day.

We make a difference by unifying art learning with the daily life experiences of our students as well as with

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other disciplines. When we compare works of art by focusing on human commonalities, we reconcile cultural and artistic differences and underscore the value of art as an essential human experience.

Making a Difference in the World of Work

Art education can make a difference in preparation for the world of work, when students acquire inquiry skills for confidently and creatively finding solutions to design problems and answers to questions about art.

An orderly and safe studio environment also contributes to productive work habits. When students learn to organize their own spaces, systems, and ways of working efficiently, they will be well prepared to succeed in the work place.

Increasingly, in the contemporary world, work places are dependent on creative and collaborative processes involving mediation between individuals. Opportunities for group work can cultivate students' sensitivities for participating in a democratic work environment.

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Travel with *SchoolArts*!

Barcelona and Northern Spain

June 21–July 3, 2012 • 13 Days

Please join Nancy Walkup, editor of *SchoolArts* magazine, and Go Ahead Tours for a thirteen-day, art-filled guided tour of Barcelona and Northern Spain, departing June 21, 2012.

Admire parks and structures designed by Antoni Gaudí in Barcelona, then discover the old-fashioned charm of seaside San Sebastian, Spain's Costa Verde, and the Old Town of Santiago de Compostela. We'll also visit the world-class Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and the Altamira National Museum.

This guided tour includes round-trip air transportation with a major airline and airport transfers; the services of a bilingual Go Ahead Tour director; professional local guides; eleven nights accommodation in well-located hotels (includes baggage handling); buffet breakfast daily; six three-course dinners, including wine or beer; private deluxe motor coach, and personal audio headset, and entrance fees to select sites.

For more information and a detailed itinerary, go to nancywalkup.grouptoursite.com/groups/nancywalkup.aspx. To obtain a price quote from your departure city or to register, please contact Lindsay.Link@EF.com about tour number 52176049. A \$300 deposit will hold your place!

New Mexico

July 11–17, 2012 & July 18–24, 2012

We are excited to announce that, for the second consecutive year, *SchoolArts* is collaborating with CRIZMAC Arts and Cultural Materials to offer a trip for educators to Santa Fe, New Mexico, during the International Folk Art Market. Last year, we had a terrific group of thirty-six educators from all over the country and together we met incredible artists, participated in hands-on activities, attended presentations, enjoyed museum visits, and attended the market. All of these exciting activities are again part of the 2012 trip, which will take place July 11–17, 2012. Details are available at www.crizmac.com/travel.cfm.

Following the Folk Art Market, we are leading a second summer trip in New Mexico, July 18–24, 2012. The theme of this tour, Pueblo Indians of the Southwest, will cover many forms of Native American art including pottery, jewelry, textiles, and more.

We will participate in hands-on activities, visit museums and pueblos, and our interaction with native guest speakers and artists from different Pueblos will add a phenomenal level of authenticity and richness to the experience. More details to follow soon at www.crizmac.com/travel.cfm.



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Realizing the value of continuous reflection on performance can make a difference in attitudes towards work. As students engage in self, peer, and instructor critiques, they learn to respect the evaluation process and develop confidence in their abilities to adjust and refine their goals.

Making a Difference in the Way Students Learn

Art education is about making connections between images and ideas that cross boundaries of time, place, culture, and discipline. Objects and images confront us with ideas about life and death, about conflict and resolution, about neglect and fulfillment, about pomp and prejudice, and much, much more. In short, exploring disciplines from multiple perspectives makes a difference in our understanding of what it means to be human.

Against cries for no more taxes, we still have a chance to make these the best of times for art education. All kids deserve the opportunity to pursue explorations in art. The nation's children are depending on us to continue making a difference. 

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