

## *Introduction*

Like many informal or emerging groups, teaching artists have largely flown under the research radar. They are difficult to categorize as a group or define as a profession. They often work freelance and have no national organizing or governing body. There is no IRS classification for teaching artists. The body of empirical research about teaching artists is slim. This absence of research continues despite the call for further research into the experiences of, and impacts made by, professional artists in schools (Arts Education Partnership, 2004). How teaching artists develop over the course of their careers is also a relatively unexplored area in research.

The overarching purpose of this dissertation study was to provide a foundational understanding of the experiences and impact of teaching artists. During the course of this study a preliminary stage theory about teaching artist development arose, suggesting that teaching artists may progress through specific stages of professional development.

### *Working definition of the term "teaching artist"*

For the purposes of this study, the following criteria were used to identify teaching artists:

- Their primary art form had to be some form of theater, dance, music or visual art. These forms are considered "the arts" by the California Department of Education. Puppetry and storytelling were considered forms of theater. Filmmaking was considered a form of visual art.

- They must professionally pursue both their art form and K-12 teaching opportunities.
- They must have taught at least once in 2004-05 or 2005-06 in a San Diego County public school or district. This teaching was broadly defined and could be in the classroom with students, in teacher training workshops, or in after-school programs.

### *Research questions*

This study examined this emerging population by looking at some of the fundamentals issues of the field. This study pursued the following research questions:

- What are the demographic characteristics of the teaching artist population in San Diego County and to what extent can these characteristics explain differences in their work patterns and environments?
- What is the experience of being a teaching artist in public schools?
- How do teaching artists perceive their impact on schools? How do principals perceive the impact teaching artists have on schools?

The developmental stage theory was not part of the original research question, but emerged during data analysis. This article will examine this stage theory and consider its implications for the arts education field.

## Literature Review

### *Who is a Teaching Artist?*

This literature review specifically examines empirical research of professional artists who teach in public schools. These artists are not in schools as credentialed teachers, but play the uniquely hybrid role of teaching artist. Previous researchers (for example, Zwirn, 2005) have made the case that credentialed arts teachers also balance art and teaching. However, for the purposes of this study and literature review, arts specialists are considered a different type of professional from teaching artists. There are significant differences between the groups based on the professional choices that each group has made. Arts specialists are certificated teachers with formal training and professional responsibilities specific to K-12 education, whereas teaching artists might have informal training and utilize unique approaches to teaching. In addition, teaching artists typically have a narrower artistic focus than arts specialists, whose focus is typically broad in content and methods (McKean, 2006). Finally, teaching artists frequently work in collaboration with classroom teachers rather than work independently like arts specialists (McKean).

This study also focuses exclusively on the visual and performing arts. Literary arts have been excluded. In California, the "arts" are defined as theater, dance, music and visual arts. Literary arts (with the exception of playwriting) fall under the curricular domain of language arts. Consequently, research on poets in schools is not included in this review.

It appears that the most commonly used working definition of a teaching artist in the research literature was provided by Eric Booth (2003a) at the Juilliard School. Booth says, "To be a teaching artist, first you have to be an artist." (p.6). Teaching artists, according to Booth, are process-oriented, distinguishing them from arts specialists who typically have a product-oriented focus. Booth further shades this definition by adding that not every artist who teaches is a teaching artist (2003b). Artists who train other artists, in private lessons, for example, would not be considered a teaching artist. Booth asserts that teaching artists provide learning opportunities in and through the arts rather than providing skill-building instruction in the arts.

### *Why Artists Teach*

This section will examine literature about teaching artists' motivation to teach. First, some literature indicates that teaching is part of a teaching artist's value system. Secondly, research suggests that teaching artists are intrinsically motivated to teach. Last, some literature shows teaching artists teach because of a complementary relationship between teaching and art.

Waldorf's (2003) survey of 51 teaching artists in the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) suggested that teaching artists taught because "it is a natural extension of deeply ingrained personal values." (p. 14). Specifically, she found there were a number of motivators for teaching

artist work, including teaching the value of artistic activity and developing a community among students.

Fawcett & Hay's (2004) study of five teaching artists' work in a Reggio Emilia preschool supports Waldorf's finding about personal values. The authors found that the teaching artists were enthusiastic about the work because of its connection to their own personal values. "One [artist] said that she was 'overwhelmed, completely empowered and inspired about [the teaching] – because it is based around freedom, lack of expectation, it's not about me, it's about (the children)' " (p. 241).

The artists in Stein's (2004) study highly valued the opportunity to teach their art form to students. Stein interviewed ten Cleveland-based teaching artists and found they were intrinsically motivated to do teaching work. "All the artists participate in arts-in-education work in schools out of an intrinsic belief in the power of the arts to educate children in innovative and meaningful ways." (p. 18). Stein did not delve into the reasons for this intrinsic motivation. It was expected that artists would be motivated by income from their teaching work, but this was not the case. They expected to be paid, but this was not a motivating factor in their decision to teach.

For some artists, teaching artist work can provide a complementary connection to professional artwork. Markusen, Gilmore, Johnson, Levi, & Martinez's (2006) study of the general population of artists in San Francisco and Los Angeles found that this is particularly true for younger artists. Not

only did teaching allow younger artists to stay connected to their art form, it also provided much needed income in the typically difficult early years of their careers. Nearly half of the 51 teaching artists in Waldorf's (2003) study also reported that their art and teaching complemented each other, allowing the artists to further explore their own art form through their teaching.

### *Improvisation as a Framework for Teaching Artistry*

There is a body of literature that points to teaching artists utilizing an improvisational approach to teaching. Eisner (1991) wrote that, at its best, "teaching is an artistically pervaded activity" (p 44). He elaborated that teaching, like art, should "provide a deep sense of aesthetic experience to both perceiver and actor when it is done well." (p. 44). He says that good teaching is "the ability to exploit unforeseen opportunities in order to achieve aims that could not have been conceptualized beforehand" (p44). In his essay, Eisner does not use the word *improvisation* specifically, but his description of good teaching could also be a description of good improvisation.

Huberman (1993) also asserts that virtuoso teaching is improvisational, comparing teachers to jazz musicians. A good teacher starts with a structured situation, but then allows the majority of the lesson to be improvised. Huberman notes that virtuoso teachers are able to think on their feet and draw on their experiences of similar situations as they go

forward with the lesson. This is a challenging but enjoyable experience for the teacher.

Goldberg (2000) builds on Huberman's jazz musician metaphor further in describing a cohort of teaching artists she studied. The artists met weekly to discuss their teaching work and she found their meetings to be improvisational in nature, much like a jazz ensemble rehearsing together. Goldberg observed that the discussion and sharing of ideas were like musical riffs, one building on another to continue a theme.

*Keith Johnstone and Viola Spolin*

There are two major figures whose work informs the key concepts of improvisation within the context of drama. Johnstone is considered one of the most significant figures in contemporary improvisation, having essentially created much of the technique and vocabulary in use today.

Viola Spolin's work began at Hull House in Chicago, established by Jane Addams. Addams has been credited with originating the idea of sending artists into schools (Rabkin & Powell, 2006). Designed as theater games, Spolin's approach to improvisation was based in play. Because of its play-based nature and the ease with which her work breaks down complex ideas into games, Spolin's work has been used frequently with children and youth, but its themes are relevant for actors of any age.

*Improvisational Concepts in Teaching Artistry*

Drawing on Spolin (1963) and Johnstone (1994), there are two key concepts from improvisation that undergird the stage theory of teaching artist development. They are “learning through doing” and “connection with others”.

*Learning through doing.* In improvisation, learning is experiential. Johnstone (1994) insisted that improvisation can be learned only by doing and not by studying. Books are nearly useless to the actor who wishes to improvise. This is a difficult approach to learning for some, because it is not something that can be done privately but, rather, must be done in public.

Spolin’s work is also built on this concept. Spolin approaches the idea of experiential learning using the structure of game playing. Through the game playing, students experience and learn about the concept at hand. Since much of Spolin’s work was rooted in child development, it is not surprising that learning is embedded into engaging and experiential activities.

*Connection with others.* The second framing concept from improvisation is a connection with others. Johnstone’s (1994) approach to the idea of a connection with others focused primarily on the other actors. He encouraged actors to cooperate and collaborate onstage. He discouraged actors from shifting the audience’s focus away from the entire ensemble onto themselves. Johnstone wanted actors to give and take amongst themselves.

Spolin's (1963) focus on building a connection with others was more about the connection between actors and audience. Spolin was emphatic that the audience was an important and engaged part of a performance. She wrote that for the actor the audience is "a group with whom he is sharing an experience." (p. 13). According to Spolin, since the audience makes a contribution to the performance, actors must be in relationship with the audience.

### Methodology

The design of this study used a mixed methodology. Mixed methods are believed to offer researchers a variety of advantages. Greene, Caracelli & Graham (1989), for instance, wrote that mixed methodology allows one methodology to provide "elaboration, enhancement, illustration [and] clarification" for the other (p. 259). Through this method, the researcher is able to examine different – but similar – aspects of a phenomenon, with each method revealing nuances that the other method may not. The authors used the analogy of an onion to describe this type of study, in that each method peels back layers as the study progresses. Ideally, a mixed methods approach maximizes the strengths of each method and minimizes the weaknesses. It has been suggested that mixed methods offer an exhaustive reporting approach that offers the researcher the most complete and transparent perspective of the findings (Smith, 1997).

This study specifically used a mixed methods sequential exploratory design (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann & Hanson, 2003). Because of the exploratory nature of this design, it did not require a theoretical framework at the beginning. It was expected that a theoretical framework would appear as fieldwork progressed and the literature review was developed.

This design was conducted in phases and alternated methodologies as it progressed. Table 1 illustrates the sequence of the design for this dissertation.

Table 1. Study stages

Preliminary study	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Qualitative Data collection & analysis	Quantitative Data collection & analysis	Qualitative Data collection & analysis	Mixed methods analysis

*Sampling.* 93 San Diego-based teaching artists completed the study survey. In addition, ten teaching artists were recruited for interviews. To select the interviewees, the survey respondents were sorted by their willingness to be interviewed. In addition, artists with whom I had a personal relationship were removed from consideration. Next, to create a diverse sample, a matrix was created to sort artists by art form, gender, age, ethnicity and their level of enthusiasm for being a teaching artist, thus attempting to identify a broad and balanced range across these criteria.

From there, ten artists were selected and contacted. Four of the initial artists either did not respond or declined. The matrix was reconstructed, and four artists replaced the non-respondents. The final chart of interviewees is in Table 6.

*Design of surveys.* For the quantitative stage, data were collected through a teaching artists survey designed specifically for this study. The surveys were piloted by volunteer teaching artists before their use in the field.

The teaching artist survey incorporated a variety of questions, including Likert scale and open-ended questions. The questions covered the following topics:

- Demographic information – age, gender, ethnicity and educational level
- Primary art form
- Hourly wages and hours worked in art form and as a teaching artist
- Training and preparation to be a teaching artist
- Interest in pursuing further training or certification
- Specific schools and school districts included
- Types of services provided to schools
- Feelings about being a teaching artist
- Feelings about teachers & students
- Best and worst aspects of being a teaching artist

- Reasons behind being a teaching artist

*Interviews.* Interviews were conducted after the conclusion of the survey collection and the subsequent data analysis. The interview questions elaborated and expanded upon the survey questions, providing deeper insight and richer descriptions of the quantitative data (Datta, 2005). The one-on-one interviews had an interview-guide approach but were quite conversational. The interviews ran approximately 60-90 minutes each and were conducted at locations and at times that were suitable to each teaching artist. All interviews were done in-person.

Each teaching artist was asked to bring an artifact of their teaching artist work to the interview. These artifacts were intended to be springboards into deeper conversation about teaching artist work.

### *Data Analysis*

The quantitative survey data were analyzed with SPSS in order to provide descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Once this was complete, ten teaching artists of different arts disciplines were interviewed in depth to further understand the perceptions of their specific experiences and impacts. The qualitative data from the interviews and the surveys were then analyzed. Qualitative data were coded with Atlas.ti. Themes were developed from the qualitative codes. These themes were used to construct matrices, and the qualitative and quantitative data were sorted into the matrices. Data were grouped and regrouped several times in an initial

attempt to construct a typology of teaching artists. Creating a typology had been an original goal of the dissertation. When it appeared that some teaching artists could be placed in more than one group, the typology was abandoned and a stage theory was developed instead.

There appeared to be stages rather than typologies, because the artists in the most developed group had experiences that related to the previous stages. The interviews suggested a growth process had taken place.

Because the stage theory was developed from the qualitative interview data, incorporating the quantitative survey data was challenging, as it did not address the growth process identified in the qualitative data.

Unexpectedly, the quantitative survey data revealed a distinction among the surveyed sample that had not surfaced in the interview data. The quantitative data pointed toward two orientations within two of the stages-- an art orientation and a teaching orientation. The quantitative survey data suggested three key variables that defined two orientations: the number of years spent at art versus teaching; the teaching credentials (or lack thereof) of the teaching artists; and the amount of teaching artist training. The orientations did not appear in the qualitative interview data in part because the interviewees were all later identified as art-oriented.

### Teaching Artist Demographics

*Gender, Age, and Ethnicity.*

Female teaching artists made up the majority of the sample at 74% (Table 2). The average age of the respondents was approximately 39 years old, with responses ranging from 21 to 67 years. The white respondents made up nearly 82% of the sample. African-American teaching artists were the next largest group of respondents (6.8%), followed by Hispanic teaching artists (5.7%), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Gender and ethnicity of teaching artist respondents

	Number of respondents	Frequency
<b>Gender (n = 88)</b>		
Female	65	74%
Male	23	26%
<b>Ethnicity (n=91)</b>		
African-American	6	6.6%
Asian	2	2.2%
Caucasian	72	79.1%
Hispanic/Latino	5	5.5%
Native American	1	1.1%
Filipino	1	1.1%
Bi-racial	1	1.1%
No response	3	3.3%

*Types of Art*

Theater artists made up the largest segment of participating teaching artists (Table 3). Thirty-eight percent of the sample were theatre artists, with the majority identifying as actors. Visual artists were the next largest group, making up 27 percent of the teaching artist sample. Painters were the largest portion of visual artists. Artists from both dance and music each made up 12 percent of the sample. The remaining 11 percent of the sample came from puppetry, storytelling and mime combined.

Table 3. Primary art form of teaching artist respondents (n= 85)

Art form	Number of respondents	Frequency
<b>Theater</b>		
Playwriting	1	1.2%
Directing	5	5.9%
Acting	22	25.7%
Theatrical design	1	1.2%
Storytelling	3	3.5%
Puppetry	2	2.4%
Mime	1	1.2%
<b>Visual Arts</b>		
Painting	12	14.1%
Sculpture	3	3.5%
Filmmaking	1	1.2%

Photography	2	2.4%
Graphic arts	3	3.5%
<b>Dance</b>		
Dance – folk	1	1.2%
Dance – misc.	2	2.4%
Dance – modern	6	7.1%
Dance – musical theatre	2	2.4%
Choreography	2	2.4%
<b>Music</b>		
Instrumental music	10	11.7%
Vocal music	4	4.6%
<b>Other arts:</b>	2	2.4%

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### *Service to Schools*

Teaching artists provide a number of different services to San Diego County public schools (Table 4). The majority of the teaching artist sample reported teaching lessons about their art form. The fewest teaching artists reported coaching teachers one-on-one.

This finding may also help dispel a myth common to teaching artists working in schools. One frequent criticism aimed at artists in schools has been that they are typically in schools to provide a performance experience. In-school performances have been questioned about their impact on student

learning. While 62% of the performing artists in the sample did report performing in schools, they also reported greater frequency of teaching about their art form or using their art form to teach other areas of the curriculum. This finding suggests that the use of teaching artists in school is evolving to be more interactive with students than is generally perceived.

Table 4. Services teaching artists provide at schools (n=70)

	Number of respondents	Frequency
Teach about the art form	57	81.4%
Integrate the arts	38	54.3%
Perform	37	52.8%
Teach after-school programs	37	52.8%
Direct group	28	40%
Develop curriculum	26	37.1%
Provide professional development for teachers	25	35.7%
Coach teachers one-on-one	13	18.5%

#### *Hours per Month at Teaching & Art*

As shown in Table 5, the art making appeared to be a part-time pursuit for many teaching artists in the sample, who spent on average 76 hours per month at their art. With an average teaching load of 42 hours per

month, the surveyed teaching artists spent nearly twice as much time on average on their art than on their teaching.

Table 5. Time spent working as a teaching artist

	Number of respondents	Mean	Standard deviation	Range of answers
Hours per month spent at art form	79	76.80 hours	53.89	3 - 200 hours
Hours per month spent teaching	70	42.25 hours	47.89	1 - 200 hours

### Overview of the Teaching Artist Stage Theory

There appeared to be distinct stages of teaching artist development (Figure 1). Nearly all of the interviewees described beginning in an improvisational stage, where teaching artist work was largely spontaneous and improvised. Some teaching artists moved from the improvisational stage to the growth stage, a career development stage where the interviewees hone their teaching skills. Finally, there was the established stage, where teaching artists focused their teaching to specific services and age groups and viewed themselves as veterans in the classroom. The stage theory may be a fluid rather than linear process where artists move back and forth between stages.

Some interviewees described having a difficult time at teaching artist work. These artists, who struggled in the improvisational stage, moved to

the mismatched stage, because they found teaching in schools to be a frustrating and unrewarding experience.

Within the growth and established stages, two orientations also arose during analysis. Teaching artists appeared to have either an art orientation or a teaching orientation.

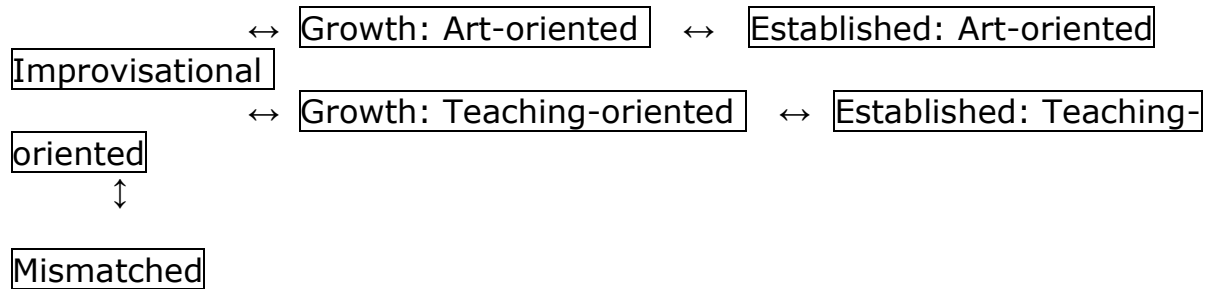


Figure 1. Stage theory of teaching artists' development

### Descriptions of the Stages

An in-depth description of each stage, along with examples from the interviewed teaching artist sample, is provided below. In addition, a description is provided of the art orientation and the teaching orientation. As noted earlier, there were ten interviewed teaching artists. Table 6 provides some brief demographic information about each interviewee.

Table 6. Interviewed teaching artists

<b>Name</b>	<b>Art form</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age/ Ethnicity</b>	<b>Years teaching</b>	<b>Years of professional</b>
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					<b>art making</b>
<i>Visual Art</i>					
Jennifer	Painter	Female	33/Caucasian	3	10
<i>Theatre:</i>					
Milton	Actor	Male	67/African-American	7	7
Spike	Actor	Male	55/Caucasian	25	30
Sarah	Actor	Female	33/Bi-racial (Asian & Middle Eastern)	3	11
Hannah	Storyteller	Female	55/Caucasian	26	25
<i>Music:</i>					
Kelly	Vocalist	Female	34/Caucasian	3	15
John	Instrumentalist	Male	34/Caucasian	12	10
Elaine	Pianist	Female	43/Caucasian	20	25
<i>Dance</i>					
Xavier	Choreographer	Male	44/Hispanic	22	28
Carol	Dancer	Female	27/Asian-American	11	19

### *Improvisational Stage*

This first stage was the point at which nearly all of the interviewed teaching artists began. What made this stage improvisational were: 1) unplanned entries into teaching work; and 2) the learning to teach informally and experientially.

The interviewees discussed “falling into” teaching artist work or having it find them without their seeking it out. Of all the interviewed teaching artists only Jennifer, the painter, knew she wanted to teach and, thus, her entry into teaching was purposeful. However, Jennifer was improvisational in how she learned to teach.

In addition to their unplanned entries into the field, nearly all the teaching artists related stories about how they learned to teach by doing or learning experientially. "Making it up as I went along," was an idea that echoed through the interviews. Learning by doing is a component of theatrical improvisation (Johnstone, 1994; Spolin, 1963) and contributes to the improvisational nature of teaching artist work. Milton and Spike, actors, represented this stage. The criteria for interviewees to be grouped at this stage were as follows:

- Teaching artist work had to be something the interviewee enjoyed.
- The interviewee had not sought out teaching but rather had it "fall into their lap".
- The interviewee was not interested in further developing or codifying their teaching artist work.
- The interviewee's teaching was often improvisational in nature, typically spontaneous and "in the moment".

Most of the interviewed teaching artists moved on from this stage. However, it appeared that Spike and Milton remained at this stage. Spike had an undergraduate degree in education and in college had planned on being a teacher. But once he discovered acting, his professional ambitions changed, and he set teaching work aside. Spike said, "After college, I never said to myself, well, I'm going to be a teacher now. All my teaching jobs kind of grabbed me. I didn't go out to grab them." Spike related that he

very much enjoyed the performance qualities of teaching and appeared to thrive on its improvisational aspects. However, he did not express interest in developing his teaching skills further.

Milton was a second-career teaching artist, after a successful career as a classroom teacher and principal. Milton's teaching artist work illustrated two important aspects of improvisation. First, he enjoyed the spontaneity that is a hallmark of this stage. The second was the need to connect with others. The give-and-take between players that is necessary in improvisation came to life in Milton's description of how he approaches teaching. He related how he was in constant collaboration with both teachers and students.

I'm finding more and more how unique my approach really is. What I'm helping teachers do now is to trust the kids. This [teaching artist] work is collaborative and sometimes a teacher doesn't have a particular idea and we talked about a few basic things. I always encourage them to see what the kids think. And, boy, is that a big move for some people. I think I've been very helpful to a few teachers that way. Teachers get more into finished products. Sometimes teachers don't come up with [a specific idea]. I say, that's all right. It's about the process.

Milton was firmly rooted in the improvisation stage, and despite his impressive tenure as a classroom teacher and principal, he was more suited

to this stage than to the other stages. In his mid-sixties, Milton's teaching artist work was only a piece of his retirement. A man of diverse interests and abilities, Milton relished his retirement and the freedom that came with it. His interest in acting had begun to diminish, in part because of the time commitment. He did teaching artist work because he enjoyed it and wasn't interested in building on it as another career. Progressing to either of the next two stages would have required a greater commitment of time and energy in both his acting and teaching. Even though the teaching artist work brought great joy to Milton, he did not see himself developing it further.

### *Growth Stage*

As described by the interviewees, growth-stage teaching artists had chosen to include thoughtful and purposeful teaching as part of their professional palette. They had moved from an improvisational approach in their teaching artist work to a more intentional one. This stage was called growth, because these artists were in career development mode. They greatly enjoyed the teaching aspect of their work and were typically looking to develop it further.

In their interviews, many of the teaching artists described moving from improvisational to a growth period where they began to develop their art and teaching in earnest. Six of the artists--Kelly, the vocalist, Xavier, the choreographer, Elaine, the pianist, John the trombonist, Hannah the

storyteller and Jennifer the painter--all described periods where they had actively pursued the development of their teaching. However, of these six teaching artists, this was the current stage for Kelly, the vocalist, John, the trombonist and Jennifer, the painter. The criteria developed for this stage are as follows.

- Interviewee described her/himself as actively developing teaching skills.
- Interviewee described her/himself as actively developing as a professional artist.
- Interviewee greatly enjoyed teaching artist work and wanted to continue to pursue it.
- Interviewee described being open to teaching a variety of ages and taking on different types of projects and services in schools.

They described themselves as currently being in the process of developing their teaching. They were confident about their teaching skills, but they all described themselves as continuing to learn and explore in this area. For example, Kelly, the vocalist, who had first learned to do teaching artist work improvisationally, actively pursued training opportunities with a local school district to develop her teaching skills and knowledge. John, the trombonist, explained that, to continue his learning as a teacher, he would sometimes swap students with another musician. Then he would observe

his colleague teach and catch things that missed John's radar. This pushed him to grow further as a teacher. John explained,

To me the most important thing about being a teacher is being a student. You have to be willing to learn to be a better teacher. I feel like the longer I teach I'm definitely learning more and more. I'm 20 times the teacher now than I was 10 years ago.

Xavier, the choreographer, Elaine, the pianist, and Hannah, the storyteller described this stage in the past tense, suggesting they were at a different stage in their development. The age of the interviewees during their growth stage varies. Kelly, John and Jennifer are all in their 30s. However, Xavier described himself at this stage in his late teens when he was assisting his mentor. A particularly vivid memory of this period was of his first production of *West Side Story*. As his mentor's assistant, he was charged with teaching the choreography to a company of dancers older and much more experienced than he was at the time. He described undertaking this challenge--and not being daunted by it--as a significant step in becoming a choreographer and teacher.

Elaine's experience working as an accompanist for choirs was not dissimilar from Xavier's apprenticeship. She learned to teach while working closely with conductors who were good, but who came from a perspective very different than the singers. "I've gained a lot just by sitting at the foot of great conductors, which I guess we could say would be great music

educators. I'm doing my job, but I'm also watching him, like student teaching or classroom observation."

### *Established Stage*

As described by the interviewees, established-stage teaching artists were confident in their teaching work. They had developed strong teaching skills and were more focused on the specific services they provided. The development of teaching skills that was a hallmark of the growth stage was far less evident during this stage. These artists focused on specific services by this stage--the willingness to be a jack-of-all-trades that was a standard of the previous stage was gone by this point. This is not to suggest that these teaching artists were not developing their art; to the contrary, their professional art continued to develop and grow. However, their teaching had become an established practice. Among the interviewees, this stage was represented by Xavier, Elaine, and Hannah the storyteller. The criteria developed for this stage are as follows.

- Interviewee enjoyed teaching artist work, but enthusiasm was more muted than the growth stage.
- Interviewee described her/himself as having worked improvisationally and developed teaching skills in the past. This was not a present activity or concern.
- Interviewee described her/himself as continuing to develop as a professional artist.

- Interviewee described having specific parameters for his/her teaching artist work. These parameters weren't universal, but indicated that these teaching artists had limited the scope of their teaching work

Xavier was exceptionally clear about the parameters of his teaching work. He was also very confident about his teaching and had amassed decades of knowledge in teaching dance. He acknowledged that this confidence and knowledge came in part from his work in his dance company, where the professional dancers are often the same age as his high school students. Confidence and knowledge of Xavier's teaching were apparent when he explained that he taught in a district-run fine arts camp each summer. The district pushed to increase the program size, but Xavier was firm that he would take only a dozen dance students. He knew the parameters necessary to make the program succeed, and he was "past the point in [his] life" to debate that. He had only been teaching in the camp program for a few years when the program became better funded and certificated so that arts teachers began competing for his job. For Xavier, the camp program was not about the money he earned, but about providing a special summer experience for the students. Xavier was rehired later, in part because the other teachers "really couldn't get into the spirit of the thing."

Hannah's experience in schools resulted in her having a keen eye for student dynamics in the classroom. After two decades of storytelling,

Hannah explained that she could usually size up the students in a classroom before the teacher finished introducing her to them. She could identify potential problems and defuse the situation before it became a problem during her work in the classroom.

### *Mismatched Stage*

This stage could probably happen at any point in the theory, but it appeared to occur after the improvisational stage. Rather than finding success and developing skills in teaching artist work which facilitated movement into the growth and established stages, the teaching artists in this stage struggled with the teaching work. I am calling them mismatched, because teaching in K-12 public schools was not a successful or enjoyable experience for these teaching artists. It is possible that, with mentoring, further training, or a better suited environment, they would have enjoyed the teaching experience more and developed further into the stage theory. I also posit that the improvisational nature of teaching artist work may simply not work for some teaching artists. Some may prefer careful preparation and structure to the often spontaneous character of teaching artist work.

Both Sarah, the actor, and Carol, the dancer, were representative of this stage. The criteria developed for this stage are as follows.

- Interviewee did not enjoy teaching artist work.
- Interviewee respected other artists who teach in schools, but did not personally have a good experience.

- Interviewee's negative experience was rooted in student disrespect for their art form.

Both women struggled with issues of respect in their teaching artist work. It was particularly untenable that their art work in particular was not respected by students. Neither are interested in continuing their teaching artist work or developing it further.

Sarah's teaching artist experience began well when rehearsing for a school tour, a project that genuinely excited her. But the reality of performing for student audiences was difficult and led Sarah to make artistic compromises that she later regretted.

It was hard because I felt like in the rehearsal process we were working to create this piece of integrity but the lack of design elements, the lack of preparation for the students made it too difficult to do what you had rehearsed. The other disheartening thing was that I was resorting to tricks to maintain the students' focus. They were selfish actor tricks, things that would really work well with the students because they were silly and over the top but you knew full well that you would never do on the main stage.

For Sarah, engaging the students and holding their attention was not worth degrading herself as an artist or her art form. Sarah's bad experiences in holding students' attention was in clear juxtaposition to Hannah's experiences in storytelling. Expecting the unexpected from

student audiences is part and parcel with storytelling in schools. Hannah described this incident in her interview.

One time there's a disturbance in the back of the auditorium and I'm thinking, what? Ah... I did pause for a second and then I kept on going because I didn't see an ambulance or anything. Afterwards I say, what was happening back here?! They tell me, oh, a little girl had a lizard in her pocket and it got loose! You *never* know what is going to happen.

This story suggests that improvisational skills are necessary for successful teaching artists, but that improvisation may also contribute to the quality of the teaching artist experience. Those teaching artists who are able to utilize improvisation and to accept the improvisational nature of teaching artist work may ultimately find it more satisfying than those who do not embrace it. Perhaps, for Sarah, who had spent nearly a month in rehearsal for the school tour, the improvisational aspect of teaching artist work was simply too strong a contrast to her careful preparation.

Carol was frequently invited into schools to teach Filipino dance and culture. But it had become "a chore," she realized that students had little interest in her material.

It is harder going into a classroom knowing that the teacher wants [the residency] more than the students. I don't want to put down these teachers but there are times when we think, ok, do they really

want their students to learn about this or do they want a free hour in their day? We never heard of students asking for the program.

Both Carol and Sarah were women of color and were in their late 20s to early 30s. Neither artist held a professional degree in the art form that they taught. Like teaching artists in the growth stage, these women worked professionally at their art form for 10-15 years but had spent much less time as teaching artists. Teaching was a part-time pursuit. Both ranked their feelings about being teaching artists as "fair".

### *Fluidity between Stages*

It is possible that the stage theory is not a linear process. Rather, there may be fluidity among the stages. Teaching artists may move back and forth between stages, such as when they are building new skills. The progression through the stages may be responsive, rather than rigid, in new undertakings. For example, Elaine's teaching artist work focused on being an accompanist and assistant conductor, and she was established and successful in this. But when she began to provide new services as a teaching artist--such as teaching a vocal music residency in an elementary school-- she found herself improvising again in the classroom until establishing herself in that new context.

Elaine's return to the improvisational stage after she had become an established teaching artist suggests that the stage theory may be useful in understanding teaching artists' development, particularly in relationship to

training and developing new skills and services. Elaine's experience suggests that the stage theory may be a dynamic and fluid process rather than a static one.

### Art and Teaching Orientations

During the quantitative analysis of the stage theory, two orientations emerged. Among the surveyed teaching artists, there appeared to be an art orientation and a teaching orientation. Both orientations appeared to be present at the growth and established stages. The quantitative survey data suggested three key aspects to the orientations. They were: the relationship of years spent at art and teaching; a teaching credential; and teaching artist training.

#### *Art Orientation.*

The survey data suggested that art-oriented teaching artists differed from their teaching-oriented peers in three key ways. First, they had spent significantly more years working at their art professionally than they had at teaching. And, on average, they had spent more years working at their art form than had their teaching-oriented colleagues. Secondly, none of these teaching artists held a teaching credential. Finally, they were unlikely to have had teaching artist training.

*Growth stage art-oriented teaching artists.* At 31 teaching artists, this was the largest grouping of the surveyed teaching artists. On average, these teaching artists had been working at their art form for 12 years but

had taught for fewer than five years. They spent 75 hours per month on average working at art and 31 hours per month on average working as a teaching artist. They were well-educated, with 32% holding a graduate degree. Less than half of this group reported having teaching artist training, which was most likely to have been provided by an arts organization or a university. None of these teaching artists held a teaching credential.

*Established stage art-oriented teaching artists.* There were 19 surveyed artists in this orientation. On average, the artists in this group had worked at their art for 25 years and as teaching artists for nearly 21 years.

This was a very busy group. They taught substantially more and committed more time to their art making than the teaching artists in the art-oriented growth stage. Full time work at art was done by 43% of this group and part time work was done by 57%. Teaching work was part time work for 83% of the group.

These teaching artists were very well-educated, with 47.4% of them holding a graduate degree, thus making them the group with the highest average educational attainment. None of them had either specific teaching artist training or a teaching credential.

### *Teaching Orientation.*

The survey data distinguished teaching-oriented teaching artists in three key ways. The first was that they had spent more years teaching than

they had making art professionally. They also had, on average, not worked at their art for as many years as their art-oriented peers. The second distinction was that over a third of these artists held teaching credentials. The third was that these teaching artists were far more likely to have had teaching artist training, likely to have been provided by a school district.

*Growth stage teaching-oriented teaching artists.* This was the smallest grouping of the surveyed artists, with only nine respondents fitting into this orientation. This group had been working professionally at their art, for only 4.8 years, on average, which was substantially shorter than their art-oriented peers, who had been making art professionally for 12 years. These artists reported working as teaching artists at an average of 6.5 years. These teaching artists had the lowest educational attainment of all the groupings of artists. Of the nine members of this stage, there was only one who held a master's degree. However, 33% of this group held a California teaching credential. Seventy-eight percent reported receiving teaching artist training at either a school district, arts organization or a university.

*Established stage teaching-oriented teaching artists.* Sixteen surveyed teaching artists were represented in this stage and orientation. These teaching artists had worked at their art, on average, for 23 years and as teaching artists for 20.4 years. They had spent the same number of years working as a teaching artist as their art-oriented peers; however, they had devoted fewer years to their professional art work.

These artists on average worked part time at teaching and art making. However, more teaching-oriented artists were working full time at their art by this stage than they had in the growth stage. These teaching artists were well-educated, with 31.3% of them holding a graduate degree and 38% a California teaching credential. This was the largest grouping of teaching artists to have specific teaching artist training, with 81% trained by an arts organization or a university.

### Conclusion

The stage theory is a beginning attempt to examine the professional development of teaching artists. This theory offers rich possibilities for practitioners in the training and preparation of teaching artists for their work in public schools. Rather than treating all teaching artists as equivalent, this stage theory suggests that artists can move through different stages and thus may have changing needs in terms of training and professional development. Mentoring, which should be further explored and developed, was clearly an informal training model for the participating teaching artists. Mentoring as an effective form of learning for teaching artists has been demonstrated elsewhere in the literature (Seidel, 1998).

Both mentoring and role modeling are approaches that are traditional in preparing and training artists in their art forms. Thus mentoring and role modeling are familiar and accessible to teaching artists. The training of teaching artists would do well to mimic arts training whenever possible.

Using the tools and vocabulary of the arts in preparing artists to teach is a unique and promising method. Artists learn about the world through their art form. Teaching them through the arts is a logical, challenging and ultimately exciting possibility.

Further research into the stage theory would provide a clearer, more articulated understanding of teaching artists. Case studies of teaching artists at each of the different stages and orientations may provide a deeper and richer understanding of the developmental process of teaching artists. Further exploration into the teaching orientation would be particularly useful as there were no interviewees who were identified for this orientation. In addition, further research could include an examination of the types of skills and teaching pedagogy teaching artists employ at each stage. Are there necessary skills that are specific to teaching artists? If so, what does this skill development look like? Are there pedagogical similarities and differences among stages? Last, is there a parallel development for teaching artists in their professional art? What does that look like, and how can that information be used to support their teaching work?

Researchers and practitioners have the opportunity to build on the findings of this study through inquiry and reflection on the role of professional artists in public education. The evolution of the teaching artist is particularly intriguing in a period of high-stakes testing. As reflected in this study, teaching artists' work in schools is highly individual and creative

and fosters different approaches to learning and teaching. In other words, teaching artist work is the anti-thesis of standardized testing. Practitioners and researchers in other areas of the curriculum might note with interest the evolution of teaching artists. How this concept might cross over to other subjects offers fascinating possibilities for the future.

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