Arts Design Team Report (2004-05)

Background

The Teachers for a New Era (TNE) Arts Design Team is made up of UW-Milwaukee arts education methods teachers (visual art, music, dance, theatre), MPS curriculum directors (art and music), UW-Milwaukee Letters and Science faculty, School of Education faculty, and MPS teachers. Members of the team include: Scott Emmons (Team Leader, Music), Miriam Davidson (Visual Arts), Kimberly Cosier (Visual Arts), Robin Mello (Theatre), Marcia Parsons (Dance), Christina Maranci (Art History), Barry Applewhite (Music Coord., MPS), Kim Abler (Art Curriculum Spec., MPS), Jeffery Johnson (MPS Visual Art Teacher, MTEA), Nancy Rice (Exceptional Education), and Christopher Peterson (Music).

Beginning in the Summer and Fall semesters of 2004, team members began monthly meetings to begin the process of comparing Wisconsin Academic Content Standards, Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Learning Targets, and UW-Milwaukee methods class content. During the Spring semester of 2005, the Arts Design Team shifted focus to planning programs for MPS teachers. Although the team meetings have been productive, challenges remain in coordinating the schedules of this broad range of individuals.

Findings on Content Alignment

Each of the Arts Education Programs at UW-Milwaukee consist of professional education requirements in Reading, Learning and Development, and Inclusion. These requirements are paired with specific content requirements for the arts areas studied along with fieldwork experiences. The specific content requirements reflect the demands of state and national standards in arts education. When comparing the Wisconsin Academic Content Standards, Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Learning Targets, and UW-Milwaukee methods class content, we determined that overall, when present, these three indicators are well aligned. We found it troubling, however, that MPS learning targets do not specifically exist for the theatre and dance programs.

Visual Art Education Alignment. The MPS Visual Art Learning Targets, developed in 2003, closely relate to the Wisconsin Academic Model Content Standards for Visual Art. These standards, along with the Wisconsin Teaching Standards, have been used as benchmarks for the revision of the UW-Milwaukee Art Education program, which began in 2000. Throughout the program, UW-Milwaukee art education students benefit from ongoing, formative assessment of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they are developing to become effective teachers of art in Kindergarten through 12th grade.

In addition to coursework in studio art, art history and contemporary critical theory, and educational theory and methods courses, students participate in extensive, supervised early field experiences in elementary, secondary, and community-based settings. The Art Education faculty, Dr. Kimberly Cosier and Dr. Miriam Davidson, have built a number of exciting and productive partnerships with schools and community-based organizations. The Art Education Community Engagement Initiative is an overarching title for a number of unique but related components of this collaborative community-building effort. Through these collaborative projects, students are offered teaching experiences that are integrally connected to the real lives of students, teachers, and parents as they engage in meaningful acts of cultural production and reflection. Art education students develop
standards-based, integrated curricula and create self-reflective assessment portfolios for the elementary and secondary school experiences. These projects bring together the best practices in art education, with theory and service.

**Music Education Alignment.** The MPS Music Learning Targets, adopted in the Spring of 2003, meet the Wisconsin Academic Model Content Standards for Music which parallel the National Standards for Music Education adopted in 1994. Beginning in 1994, the UW-Milwaukee Music Education area began course revision based on these national standards. The UW-Milwaukee Music Education program requires coursework in Music Education Methods, Music History and Theory, ensembles, and studio lessons as preparation for implementing the goals presented by the MPS Learning Targets and the Wisconsin Academic Content Standards in music.

Along with the coursework listed above, music education students are supervised in extensive fieldwork experiences in the elementary and secondary schools of Southeast Wisconsin. The music education faculty at UW-Milwaukee, Dr. Scott Emmons, Dr. Christopher Peterson, and Dr. Marsha Kindall Smith, have developed collaborations in the Milwaukee Public Schools that provide UW-Milwaukee pre-service teachers with experiences in an urban setting. Dr. Marsha Kindall Smith, in addition, has developed a mentorship program for first-year teachers in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Participants in this program have been featured in national and state music education conference presentations.

**Theatre Education Alignment.** In February 2000, the K-12 Theatre Education Program was fully approved under the new PI34 regulations drafted by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and graduated its first cohort of qualified teachers in the spring of that year. Since then, it graduates an average of 7 students per year who complete the program with a BA in Theatre and a license to teach Theatre K-12 in the State of Wisconsin.

The Theatre Education program has aligned its curricula with the ten Wisconsin Teaching Standards, eight UW-Milwaukee Urban Education Principles, and the eighteen Theatre Educator Competencies developed by the American Association for Theatre Education. Students are assessed on these standards through the development of a professional portfolio, competency-based observation assessments, and the Praxis II Theatre Test. In addition, TEP students are required to have in-depth knowledge of the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards (WMAS) and the Milwaukee Public School Learning Targets. These curricular initiatives are included in all content area, methods, and fieldwork courses. Also, student teachers are expected to align all assignments, units, and lessons with these curricular guidelines.

Unfortunately, the program is unable to connect its course work to MPS Learning Targets due to the fact that they do not exist for theatre in MPS. In addition, there is no administrator assigned to Theatre Education at MPS (Music Education and Art Education do have administrators who oversee the city’s programming). TEP is very concerned about this and considers these data an indication that MPS does not value theatre education.

**Dance Education Alignment.** The Dance Education Program at UW-Milwaukee (BFA or BA in Dance required) may be undertaken during undergraduate Dance degree studies, or as a Post-Baccalaureate Program. Requirements for licensure in Dance align closely with
some MPS Physical Education learning targets (MPS has no learning targets specifically for Dance at this time), particularly with reference to overall health and fitness, and in some movement skills; the UW-Milwaukee Dance requirements comply with the Wisconsin Academic Model Content Standards for Dance, Wisconsin Standards for Teachers, and the new PI 34 regulations. The thirty credits of coursework required in addition to the dance BA or BFA include the reading, learning and development, and inclusion studies; dance methods and substantial fieldwork are required. The experiences in the dance education methods classes closely relate to the national content standards in dance. The UWM Arts Design Team members suggest that the MPS administration begin developing learning targets in dance so that further program coordination may occur.

Recommendations

Arts Design team members are pleased that agreement was found between the Wisconsin Academic Content Standards, the MPS Learning Targets, and the UW-Milwaukee Curricula. Team members plan to focus their work in the upcoming summer and school year on strengthening programs that will address needs of both the MPS and UW-Milwaukee Arts Education communities. Recommendations for upcoming work include:

1. MPS administrators reexamine district commitment to all arts disciplines, including Theater and Dance, especially in light of the fact that Theatre and Dance as curricular and subject areas are recognized and required at the state, regional, and national levels. It is important that learning targets be developed for these two curricular areas.

2. Developing courses, workshops, and mentoring programs that will help induction period teachers progress to the level of master teacher. Course and program development for veteran teachers needing continuing education also need to be addressed by Arts Design Team Members.

3. Strengthen relationships between the UW-Milwaukee School of Education and the UW-Milwaukee and MPS Arts Education community. Continuing conversations about literacy and increased infusion of arts education in programs for generalist teachers need to occur.

4. Clarity in the relationships between MPS, UW-Milwaukee, and the Milwaukee Partnership Academy is important to truly implementing change in the teaching and learning that occurs in each institution. UW-Milwaukee faculty, MPS curriculum directors, and MPS teachers need to be empowered to make meaningful changes.

Unanswered Questions

Many challenges exist for members of the Arts Design Team. In this time of budgetary challenge in public education, students face narrowed curricular offerings because of cuts in Arts Education programs. Arts Design Team members are dedicated to providing a broad range of curricular arts experiences for all students. The following list details several of our primary challenges:

1. Investment of participants. How do we ensure the participation of MPS principals, teachers, and UWM faculty members?
2. MPS Teacher Workload problems. MPS teachers continue to have multiple new programs and initiatives thrust at them. How can TNE gain the trust of overworked teachers to that they do not view it as simply “one more addition to our workload?”

3. UWM Faculty Workload problems. UWM Arts Faculty numbers have diminished over the past 15 years as our numbers have grown. How will TNE design teams be able to implement plans with faculty that are already facing full teaching loads?

4. Research investment. How will TNE participants be encouraged to gather and disseminate information?

Introduction/Program Assessment

The Teachers for a New Era Arts Design Team has been actively engaged with MPS faculty, administrators, and a board member to determine need for the district’s Arts Educators and children. Several Arts Design Team members, Marcia Parsons, Kim Cosier, and Robin Mello, are hoping to address these needs during the upcoming summer by planning workshops and writing curriculum to be implemented during the upcoming school year.

Our program plans include:

I. Developing programs for induction period teachers (classroom elementary and specialists) involving technology in arts education, movement in learning, and interdisciplinary arts (for example, one course to be developed will be, “The Whole Story: Storytelling Through Interdisciplinary Arts”).

The Education Team plans to develop graduate program courses and summer institutes that will:
- Provide theme-based, summer intensive programming that will teach teachers to use storytelling through drama, dance, music, and visual art
- Support new teachers (both general elementary and arts specialists) in their induction periods by giving them interdisciplinary tools to reach students in meaningful ways
- Offer IHE guidance for Professional Development Plans through integrated technologies
- Link teaching/learning activities to literacy learning
- Link activities to mathematical and scientific learning
- Explore the language of critique and aesthetic development—making it useful in classrooms
- Infuse and integrate creative process and practice within the various disciplines for the work of teaching and learning—with a possible extra link, for those students who are interested, to action research.

Related links:
http://www.storytellingarts.net/
http://www.princeton.edu/~cbli/profiles/storyarts.html

II. Pilot Assessment Project – Specialist teachers gather information about current MPS teaching in Arts. Portfolios will be gathered and reviewed along TNE lines.
Intended outcomes include:

- Creating common assessment rubrics cross disciplines that relate to TNE objectives
- Creating common evaluation tool for specialist teachers to use in program evaluation
- Creating a matrix for data collection and analysis
- Creating assessment language appropriate for specialist teachers’ PDP plans
- Beginning training for specialist teachers involved in the project to ensure inter-rater reliability.

III. Development of Research Project between AED and CPE involving test score examination of MPS students involved in arts and not involved in arts.

Intended outcomes include:

- Joining the email conversation supported by AED concerning an arts in education “pod”
- Reviewing AED and TNE cross-site research and assessment materials
- Creating a response to these materials based on arts team expertise and interests
- Creating a policy statement to be presented to the CPE that includes AED models and concrete suggestions for data collection and analysis as it relates to arts-based teaching and learning in MPS schools
- Reviewing reports from Assessment, Pupil Learning, and Induction teams
- Creating a matrix for further data collection and programming that links Assessment, Pupil Learning, and Induction with the Arts Team activities (to be implemented during 2005-2006).

Other Achievements

Along with participating in normal planning activities during the Spring semester, Arts Design Team Members presented at a roundtable session of the American Education Research Association (AERA).