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# **From Within and from the Outside: Exploring the Possibility of a Sustainable Future for Art Education**

## **從內與外：探討藝術教育未來永續的可能性**

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## Abstract

Our vantage point defines what we see. It structures our perception, determines how we interpret what is in front of our eyes and it is often difficult to transcend the power of the perspective in which we are situated. The metaphor of a vantage point is applied in this paper to bringing to light the tension between art education as conceived by its practitioners and art education as considered by those who are positioned outside of the field. This tension has long been a source of frustration for art educators who have frequently felt misunderstood and powerless in the public discourse about the role and value of art education. Having transitioned in my professional journey from an art educator, researcher and advocate to a senior academic leader in a comprehensive research-intensive university, the author has gained an intimate understanding of both: the ways in which art educators think about their field and how it appears to the outsiders -- particularly when art education prerogatives are placed in a competitive context of other disciplines. This has prompted reflections on what changes may be called for in defining, framing and advocating for art education -- and what types of research may be required to position art education for a sustainable future in public education.

**Keywords:** advocacy, art education, curriculum, rationale, sustainability

## 摘要

制高點決定視野，並建構感知來判斷事物的重要性與利弊得失，以及詮釋眼前所見。制高點的比喻在藝術教育地位與價值的爭辯具有顯著意義，本文藉以點明藝術教育工作者與其他領域專業者之間認知衝突的緊張，成為數十年來前者挫折的來源。當其進行藝術教育於一般課程中之角色、地位，以及經費補助之重要性討論時，常覺得被誤解、被低估與無力感。本文對於藝術教育域內與域外間的兩種不同觀點，加以深刻體察，有助於藝術教育的推展，與研擬未來研究方向，以提供較佳立場加強與外界進行有效對話。

**關鍵詞：**宣傳、藝術教育、課程、理論基礎、持續性

## Introduction

As a graduate student in art education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in the early 1980s, I enrolled in a course entitled *Issues in Art Education* taught by one of the field's legends, Professor Kenneth Lansing. This course was significant for me for many reasons -- not the least of which was its role in initiating my deep socialization into the profession and in creating a foundation for the attitudes and beliefs that have helped to define me as an art educator. The course spanned a wide range of topics, but the two that I still vividly remember related to the need for art educators to have a clearly established understanding of "art" -- and the importance of reflecting on the rationale for art education, engaging in the scrutiny of own beliefs as to why teaching art to children is indeed a meritorious endeavour.

Over three decades later, these issues -- and questions and considerations that they engender -- seem to me more important than ever, especially as art education continues to lose ground in the landscape of public education around the world -- despite the lament of those firmly committed to it. These essential questions have come to a new light for me as I have recently reflected on the powerful interaction between the ways in which they have resonated with me throughout my professional life and how they shaped my identity as an art educator. This reflection happened in a context that most art educators do not have a chance to experience. It was enabled by a shift in my professional life from the earlier focus on the education in the arts to senior leadership roles in post-secondary settings. Having transformed from being an art teacher, to post-secondary art educator, to a dean of a faculty that comprised of creative arts as well as sciences and technology, and, eventually, over the past decade served as vice provost academic of a major internationally-influential comprehensive research-intensive university, I was afforded an opportunity to change the vantage point from which I looked at and considered education in the arts. As my professional journey transitioned me from a highly committed, internationally-engaged art educator, researcher and advocate to that of a senior academic leader charged with responsibilities for educational advancement across a broad spectrum of academic fields, my somewhat myopic vision of art education-constructed from within the field, has effectively become contrasted with direct, intimate experience with another often myopic vision: one that resides fully outside of art education.

Our vantage point defines what we see. It structures our perception and determines what is salient and what is secondary; what is meritorious and what can be neglected; and in what light we interpret what is in front of our eyes. Whether this vantage point is physical -- as we stand in a landscape; cultural -- as we travel to a new environment with traditions and customs

that are foreign to us; or professional -- where our acquired biases stemming from professional socialization colour our experience of reality -- we often have a difficult time transcending the power of the perspective in which we have been situated.

In this paper, I draw on the metaphor of a vantage point -- and its significance in the long standing debate about the place and value of art education -- to explore what I consider to be a growing tension between art education -- as conceived by its practitioners, and art education -- as considered by those who are positioned outside of the field. This tension has been a source of considerable frustration to art educators for decades, as they have often felt undervalued, misunderstood and powerless in the discourse about the role and place of art education in general curriculum and the importance of adequate funding for education in the arts. As it continues to challenge the possibility of a productive dialogue among those within and those outside of art education, it seems worthwhile to ponder on what underscores the existing divide. What changes may be called for in defining, framing and advocating for art education -- and what kind of research may be required to better position art educators for meaningful and ultimately satisfying conversations with the outsiders about their field and the role that it could (or should) play in public education?

## **What Is “Art” in Art Education?**

A field described as “art education” clearly anchors itself around the concept of art -- which, by default, puts art education advocacy in a somewhat of a predicament, given the ill-defined, fluid, and very much systems-dependent definition of art (Kindler, 2007; Weitz, 1956; Wittgenstein, 1958). Unlike mathematics, biology or history, where there is a common, shared underlying understanding of what these domains fundamentally entail and how they may interact with the educational landscape, how the society construes what is art depends on a set of considerations and circumstances that even within the limits of the “western world” (never mind in a cross-cultural perspective) have been in a dynamic flux for well over a century. For those within the field of art education, these changes-intrinsic to the category of art -- have not been of concern. Within our field we have uncritically decided that art must be good and worthwhile of educational inclusion regardless of how it may have reshaped its universe over time. Art has become positioned within our field a bit like a religion -- with a steady contingent of devoted followers, despite the significant adjustments to the dogma. It does not seem to matter that what used to describe a particular universe of visual representations at the time “art education” emerged has become, at best, a small subset of what art is today. With the art world’s embracement of behaviours and

representations that defy not just a common sense of decency but actively endorse acts that most civil societies would deem to be un-ethical and uselessly cruel -- it has, in my view, become seriously problematic to unconditionally advocate the value and importance of art education. Yet, it has not been frequent for art educators to seriously interrogate the many directions in which the world of art has evolved -- and ask ourselves a question whether what art has become--in all of its manifestations -- can continue to be justified, particularly for the “non-believers,” as an area meritorious of students’ time in school and societal investment of scarce resources.

When a few years ago I attempted to initiate this conversation at an international conference (Kindler, 2008), this was met with a mixed response. Although some colleagues accepted the challenge of the need to critically examine the changed nature of art and -- consequently -- its relationship to education, my presentation was also met with a significant degree of incredibility -- and even hostility -- from those outraged that a peer may ask such sacrilegious questions. It became clear to me how the passion and commitment to art education -- which on the one hand are most worthy of respect and cultivation, can, on the other hand, become a blinding force to the detriment of rational and rigorous thinking that could actually help the field to succeed in asserting itself in general education and demonstrating its meaning contributions to the society.

A recent article by Tavin and Kallio-Tavin (2014) has further reinforced my concern over the detachment and disregard, displayed at times within our field, for the values espoused within the general public which we are to serve through education. In this contribution, the authors argue, in the context of art education, the merits of violence in art and in the process venerate art that combines animal cruelty with uninhibited public displays of sexual indulgence. Aside from my personal disagreement with the authors’ (let it stand for the record that I reject the notion that the act of decapitating a cat followed by masturbation over its corpse is meritorious of inclusion in publically-funded art education curriculum), I am pretty certain that there would be extremely limited public support for teaching students how to create, engage with or appreciate such art. While Tavin and Kallio-Tavin are entitled to expressing an opinion that gives little consideration to public values and sensitivities, I would posit that art educators, and theorists whom they choose to follow, hardly have a licence for wisdom and good judgment -- or that complex intellectual arguments necessarily hold superiority over the common sense and values and beliefs deeply held within the society at large. As fashionable and profitable it has been within the field of art over the past century to shock, revolt or even disgust the public, the same is not true for art education. The more within the field perspectives fail to create a solid bridge with the understandings and expectations of public education that persist within the society, the more difficult it will be for art

education to claim a sustainable position in the educational landscape. One of the most reasonable expectations of the public is the one that seeks clarity of what “art” means in art education; clarity about what education in this field entails and how it maps onto what the society holds as important to its present and its future.

Art education, as a professional field, has not positioned itself within the art world to meaningfully impact on the definition of art -- a task largely left out to artists, critics, curators, collectors and art investors. However, we certainly have the capacity -- and perhaps an obligation -- to take a socially-responsible stance on what we teach in public education, what values we promote and how we enable our students to achieve their potential not only as artists and personally-fulfilled individuals -- but also, very importantly, as thoughtful and contributing members of civil societies. While it is true that education should expand and challenge societal perspectives, towards the betterment of global societies and environment in which they are to thrive, it should never be detached from the values and understandings that societies espouse. The challenge of existing beliefs should originate in a deep and respectful understanding of the outsiders’ perspective rather than in a forceful imposition of the insiders’ position, construed as the “ultimate truth.” I believe that success in public education rarely follows a revolutionary path -- it is a process of negotiation of understandings and beliefs that draws on incremental shifts in attitudes and beliefs, on respectful persuasion and patient reasoning. Consequently, situating the educational undertaking firmly within the expectations of the society and demonstrating relevance to the values and aspirations that are important to the public serves as an important enabler of these changes.

Reflecting back on Professor Lansing’s class some three decades ago, I appreciate today more than ever his concern over art educators’ ambivalence towards the need for the definition of art and the dangers that stem from the field moving away from “clearly explicated points of view” (Lansing, 1980, p. 57), which he considered to be critically necessary to properly frame and operationalize the teaching of art. The lack of the definitional precision of what art means in art education, combined with the passion and zeal for any and all kind of “art” that emerges today, have created, in my view, a toxic mix that poisons the field’s potential to evolve in ways that would not only continue to ensure its societal relevance but also allow to effectively and convincingly communicate it. If our desire is to be successful in public advocacy efforts, we need to define “art” in art education in ways that can be understood by and resonate with the society or we should reconsider how we refer to our field. Most importantly, we should move beyond the

“high-minded and cerebral” arguments (Mitchell, 2015)<sup>1</sup> that have often permeated our discourse and speak the language that resonates with the public, the language that calls for concreteness, transparency, and accountability.

## **Bridging the Divide**

What strategy could then be proposed to position art education better for tangible public support? I will attempt to answer this question by articulating what I consider to be five essential steps towards positioning art education as a credible contender for a wide-spread public endorsement. This list draws on my experience as an “outsider” who had faced the need to make administrative decisions in contexts where art education competed with other priorities in post-secondary education. My advice is offered with the benefit of a visceral understanding of complexities involved in managing limited public resources within a framework and expectations of public accountability. As I articulate these steps, I will attempt to highlight changes that I believe would be required within the field itself; consequent necessary adjustments in the positioning of the advocacy arguments; and, importantly, the kind of research that would be needed to develop and effectively support credible advocacy claims.

### **Five Steps Towards a Sustainable Art Education**

#### **Step 1: Clarify the Subject**

As I have argued above, the clarity of what art education is exactly to contribute through a dedicated time in public curriculum -- explained in a plain and easy to understand language -- is essential. We need to challenge ourselves to shed the loftiness and generality that have frequently characterized our discourse about the nature and value of art education. Considering the broad-ranging discourse within the field over the past few decades about the ways in which we could make most meaningful contributions to education, it is important to take a clear stance on what we are committed to today.

Part of that stance, as argued earlier in this paper, requires us to define our relationship to art -- and clarify what we mean by art in art education. Importantly, it also calls for the determination whether art education has a responsibility -- or not -- to specifically nurture the capacity for

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<sup>1</sup> Mitchell used these terms to describe arguments typically used in justifying liberal arts education; he was not referring specifically to fine arts.

artistic expression; whether its mandate encompasses educating audiences for art (including most contemporary of its manifestations); and/or whether the primary rationale of art education lies elsewhere -- within the realm of individual or societal betterment that may use approaches, techniques or ways of thinking associated with the arts in the achievement of these goals. If development and bringing into fruition artistic talent is to be prominently featured as a goal, then art educators ought to think how they should define their endeavour as a form of professional education (at least for this part of the mandate) -- with the same considerations that apply to other professional fields.

I do not believe that within the field of art education we have achieved a consensus on these issues. We seem to have focused debates more on curricular inclusion and content, often prompted by the need to respond to government-advanced notions of educational reforms, than these fundamental questions which should drive curriculum and pedagogy. As individual educators, we have our personal views and answers -- and it would be unrealistic and perhaps even undesirable to expect that they would ever be in a perfect alignment across the profession. However, art education's solid grounding in education cannot be ensured unless we develop a clear, well-articulated educational platform to which we agree to commit. A good approach to developing such a platform would be through a strategic, rigorous, research-supported discourse guided by commitment to achieving a timely outcome. Notwithstanding the need for the latter, as I consider the circumstance of the globalized, technologized, economically-challenged and politically-tense 21st century and most urgent societal educational needs in this complex context, I believe that priorities and deliverables related to the following human abilities may be good contenders for inclusion in this platform: (1) those that draw on visual perception and cognition; (2) those that enable thoughtfulness and creativity at the intersection of art and design and lead to an increased capacity to design processes and products that effectively navigate the form-and-function continuum, with due consideration to the environmental, cultural and social sustainability; and (3) those that can be tangibly connected to skills and competencies that map onto the current (and foreseen) labour market needs.

As the prerogatives that define art education are being clarified (not an easy but absolutely necessary task), they should be articulated in ways that allow for the development of realistic expectations regarding the outcomes of the educational process and ways in which their attainment can be appraised. This is not to say that art education as a field should be reduced to trivial concepts that can be simplistically described and assessed through standardized testing (an argument that, I believe, our field has historically abused in order to absolve itself from the need to be more precise

and accountable for educational outcomes). It is rather to express these priorities in ways that would allow the society to make an informed investment in art education and be able to monitor how it performs. Whether we settle on a narrow set of clear educational objectives -- or a broader repertoire of well-described contributions, we ought to articulate them in ways that convey what we will deliver, and what will remain outside of our scope.

We should resist the temptation of arguing that art education is too complex to define because art is such a vast and dynamic universe. Many other disciplines have also evolved in recent years in ways that have been both: extremely rapid and difficult to predict or anticipate even a decade ago. We do not need to define our focus for decades to come and our priorities may shift over time. But we need to be able to clearly answer questions about the intended educational outcomes that we commit to delivering today -- particularly as curricula and programs in other areas of education have recently been increasingly re-defined through references to outputs rather than aspirations or investments. Although post-secondary education has been long characterized by the “addiction” to measuring educational progress through academic credits, there is now a strong trend to depart from this practice in favour of focusing on and assessing educational outcomes (Deller, Brumwell, & MacFarlane, 2015). As Mitchell (2015) argues with respect to liberal arts, leaving behind “high-minded and cerebral arguments” does not render arts-related disciplines powerless to build a strong case for a meaningful presence in education, as long as the language of argumentation changes to emphasize and account for contributions that relate to outputs that reverberate with the mindsets of the society at large. I believe that Mitchell’s claim that “the shift to ‘outputs’ language offers a plausible and effective defense of the liberal arts” could be extended to art education, if we choose to shed contempt for a discourse that emphasizes down-to-earth, pragmatic, reality-grounded arguments over those that appeal to high-minded ideas and lofty aspirations.

As we attempt to be more clear and precise about art education’s societal contributions, a broad range of research will be needed in order to accomplish this task. Historical research that explains the emergence and trajectory of our field can help demonstrate how art education has been evolving and perhaps help dismantle misperceptions and myths about art and art education that no longer reflect the field. Inquiry into tangible impacts of art education, particularly through case studies and empirical research, would be of significant value in articulating the knowledge, values, attitudes, competencies, and dispositions that have been acquired both in the past and more recently through art education. It would also allow to interrogate the efficacy of these contributions.

## Step 2: Align Practice with Purpose and Value Claims

Demonstrating, through rigorous research, the alignment between the statements of purpose of art education, actual classroom practice and the outcomes in terms of students' educational attainment, would be especially powerful in advocating for public support. The weaknesses of art educators' rhetoric has been not so much in the general nature of our claims: the idea of fostering creativity, encouraging self-realization or developing appreciation for things that otherwise one may miss in their life experience seem to resonate with most people. Where art education has been failing in building its case has been in the inability to demonstrate how what happens in the classroom meaningfully advances these priorities and how its contributions can be expressed in ways that the public could tangibly grasp.

Part of the problem may rest in what I see as the misalignment between the stated claims and the reality of curriculum, pedagogies and student experience. For example, much of art education practice continues to be focused on making products -- drawings, paintings, prints, three-dimensional artifacts -- while the ability to produce any of such things with clearly expressed standards attached does not figure prominently as an important educational outcome. Furthermore, what evidence do we have that being able to produce an artifact of certain defined qualities reflects or translates into an increase in creativity? Although it is assumed within the field -- and argued externally -- that the act of generating these objects entails processes that support individual betterment that we are seeking, such argument is weakly supported by credible evidence. For example, if any act of drawing supports creativity -- than why an educational setting is required for the creative advancement? And if only some kinds of drawing, specifically those supported by purposeful teaching, result in positive outcomes -- what is the nature and focus of instruction that enables this achievement?

Furthermore, as we know, human creativity has the capacity to trigger both progress and demise, and contribute to -- as much as solve-significant social, political and ethical dilemmas. If art education is about the encouragement of creativity, it is a reasonable question to ask what measures we put in place through curriculum and pedagogies to ensure that, as a publically-supported enterprise, art education will support the "positive" creativity. How these concerns are reflected in what and how we teach -- and how will we know that we have been heading in the right direction? These kinds of questions lend themselves to inquiry that spans the methodological universe. Importantly, some empirically grounded studies, including longitudinal explorations, may provide guidance for the future evolution of art education as well as strengthen the field's capacity to effectively argue for its survival in public education.

### **Step 3: Establish Relevance and Justify the “Territorial Claim”**

In the highly competitive world of educational priorities, it is currently insufficient to have a clear set of well-articulated priorities aligned with professional practices in order to ensure attainment of advocacy goals. With budgets for education constantly under strain, the decision makers are forced to make difficult decisions about relative priorities. Today, more than ever, they are under strong societal pressure to demonstrate that they have explored all possible efficiencies and eliminated any redundancies. In this context, art education needs to be clear not only on its priorities -- but also be able to persuasively articulate how these priorities align with important societal prerogatives and why art education is uniquely well positioned to champion their attainment. The centre of gravity of a persuasive argument has shifted from just the internal logic and strong, objective value proposition to a convincing argument of a comparative worth and a demonstration as to why art education would be required to achieve the highly desirable goals that society supports. Clearly, this is not how we have been used to think about the rationale for art education within our own community. However, this is what is presently required to satisfy the outsiders' expectations.

Consequently, we need to be able to argue for art education not just because it relates to significant, worthwhile body of knowledge, attitudes, skills and values. We need to be able to demonstrate that art education outcomes are societally as relevant and as important as those advanced through language or science education. How art education is relevant to what students need to succeed and prosper in today's world? How do the set educational outcomes respond to what society expects to be achieved through public education? How does the knowledge that students learn relate to the needs of the job market or to civic leadership? What return will such learning bring on the investment, including in economic terms?

We also ought to be able to isolate what aspects of this learning are unique to and have to be advanced through our discipline because no other area of public curriculum is equipped to support them. The argument about our uniqueness needs to be captured in precise language that avoids over-claims. It needs to be pragmatically grounded and expressed in words that can be understood by the general public. An example of a persuasive claim could perhaps connect art education's long-standing preoccupation with the visual ways of engaging with the world; the paramount relevance of these modes of cognition to contemporary societies where technology and social media rely so heavily on visually mediated communication; and the absence of expertise in other curricular areas to support education within this realm.

This line of reasoning needs, of course, to underlie considerations mentioned above in steps 1 and 2. As much as art can be about anything and everything that the world of art will chose for it to

be, the reality is that art education does not have this flexibility. Its survival depends very directly on public societal support. Consequently, it would be worthwhile for art education research to invest in inquiry about the societal expectations that education delivered through our field could uniquely be able to provide. We are not used to this humble positioning -- yet, in my view, it holds the best promise for a successful future of art education: not only as a well-situated contender for public funding but also for the evolution of the field in the directions that are consistent with the evolving societal needs. Consequently, a wide range of surveys of public opinion, including those that involve parents of school-aged children and employers in sectors that draw on graduates of art schools (or where knowledge and skills developed through public art education are known to be particularly applicable to professional success) -- and in fact anyone outside of the world of art and art education--could yield new and highly relevant insights. It is critically important for the field of art education to understand better and embrace the outsiders' perspective and learn to de-centre from the insiders' view in order to re-position itself for a successful future.

#### **Step 4: Demonstrate and Communicate Achievement**

Research is desperately needed that would allow to capture gains and achievements facilitated through art education--particularly with reference to the societal priorities and goals, as defined through step 3. In fact, research on methodologies that would best enable accurate, valid and credible assessments of outcomes and their societal usefulness would be an important area for inquiry in its own right. For decades many art educators have argued against the application of standard methods of assessment applied in other areas. Yet, I do not believe we have convincingly articulated credible alternatives that would be both: suitable from the art education perspective and acceptable outside of the field. A renewed interest in research in assessment, not just from the perspective of meeting specific curricular outcomes but also in terms of these outcomes translating into the anticipated societal contributions, would be very relevant in the current context of educational politics.

Another area where I believe art education should invest heavily is in the dissemination of such research outside of the field. I reckon that the structures of the academia, particularly in North America, have favoured peer-reviewed journal publications, destined towards specialized audiences, in determining researchers' academic careers. The trouble is that these publications do not reach the general audience which, in order to lend it support to the field, needs to learn about the value of art education as determined through rigorous research and not just through compassionate declarations or anecdotes. This gap between what we know within the field about

such research (as scarce as it may be) and the outsiders' knowledge of the matter is immense and greater than in other disciplines, such as science, which benefit from more extensive media coverage of significant developments in their fields and their potential translation into tangible impact on human lives. Despite the skewed rewards system that does not accord much value to non-peer reviewed peer-oriented publications, I believe that art education researchers need to strategically re-focus some of dissemination efforts on informing general public about what we do, how we do it, with what degree of success, and how it all adds up to a significant societal benefit in areas that the public deems to be of importance. We need to move some of this discourse from within to the outside of the field.

### **Step 5: Embrace the Realities of Today's World and Find Ways to "Live Happily Ever After"**

This last piece of advice is perhaps somewhat trivial -- but accepting it would not be without a challenge. Art education has inherited from the world of art the tendency to see and frame itself at the edge of reality. Art has allowed itself a very privileged position of a strategic detachment from many constraints of everyday life in order to nurture the unconstrained freedom of expression that artists have been seeking. Having successfully created its own art world bubble, artists can choose in their work to accept or reject the opportunity to engage with the realities of the world; to concern themselves or not with public opinion; and to care or not about the comprehensiveness and transparency of their message to broad audiences. Art can exist for art's sake -- art education cannot.

In my observations, art education has historically seen itself as being intellectually aligned more closely with art than with education, especially in the ways in which it has shaped its culture and defined its *raison's d'être*. I have doubts whether in today's context this positioning supports art education's cause. In times where societies suffer from political, economic and environmental challenges to the extent unprecedented in recent decades -- and when not just school districts but entire countries find themselves at the brink of an economic collapse -- the reality is that the public will be increasingly conservative in its investments in education by prioritizing those that can deliver significant societal value in most tangible ways and in critically relevant areas.

As I reflect on the ways in which art education has formulated its rationale, at least for as long as I have been a part of the field, we have tended to be more proud of the intrinsic rationale pointing to the unique value of art in human experience than of the extrinsic rationale that suggests ways in which art education can serve other societal goals. To be fair, the lack of enthusiasm for the latter could be attributed to a limited -- and at times not fully convincing -- body of research

attempting to demonstrate such value (Bamford, 2009), including insider-biased over-claims. Yet, I believe that the future of art education lies in a much closer alignment with current and emerging key priorities of general education, in its unique contributions to the development of dispositions that underlie success not only in terms of a personal emotive or intellectual fulfillment -- but also, very importantly, in terms of lasting and meaningful contributions to the broadly conceived societal, civic and economic advancement. This calls for a surge in research that interrogates existing and possible interactions between art education and the repertoire of current societal needs and exploring research-informed design and assessment of curricula and pedagogies reshaped through these new insights.

One aspect of reality that will be difficult to swallow -- but which I believe is critically important to a good strategic positioning for our field -- relates to the acceptance of the likelihood that public funds for art education will remain stable at best, and most likely will decrease over time. As an art educator, I spent immeasurable time crafting arguments for an increased funding for art education and harbouring hope that based on the rational and well-documented submissions my pleas will fall on a fertile ground. However, as a senior university administrator, I experienced first-hand, how it is impossible to give from the empty -- and how difficult decisions have to be made that result in shifting resources from very worthwhile priorities to those of critical urgency and importance. Unless art education finds a way to present itself -- in ways grounded in solid evidence -- as belonging to the category of these most critical priorities (a task that perhaps is not impossible, but certainly not easy to achieve) -- we may need to look for new ways to respond to the harsh reality of financial constraints.

No educator likes to think about curriculum and pedagogy from the perspective of what we can afford -- and yet, we no longer have the luxury in public education to expect that the society will fund everything that is curricularly and pedagogically meritorious. We have reached a zone of most uncomfortable choices that we as a field are called -- and have the capacity -- to make. These choices may require us to remove from art education curriculum some content that we have long valued and deemed essential but have no longer the capacity to effectively deliver. They may require consideration of shifting our pedagogies towards those that deliver most educational value at the lowest expense. Most of all, they will appeal to us to find creative ways of having these changes add up to an educational process and outcomes that are more relevant and contributing to the society than ever before. I realize how unwelcome and un-popular this recommendation may be and respect the resistance that it may engender. Yet, I see it as a part of the reality that we need to embrace -- and I would much rather face it as an exciting challenge which will stretch the

capacity of our collective imagination, than as an exercise of a bitter surrender that will position others to make choices for us.

Having made one uncomfortable recommendation, I will make another. I believe that we ought to look for ways in which art education can be more entrepreneurial in seeking support outside of the public realm. Before I continue, let me confirm that I have long been -- and remain to be -- a believer in the notion that public education ought to be paid for through public funds. However, the reality is that many societies have a rapidly shrinking margin of tolerance for additional taxation and that what is currently collected increasingly comes short of what is required to support all important public priorities. Notwithstanding mismanagement and poor decisions that occasionally lead to the wastage of public resources; inefficiencies in some government programs and operations that contribute to it; and the taxation loopholes that -- if closed -- would expand the pool of funds available for dispensation towards public good -- in North America (and I believe elsewhere as well) we have recently been facing additional significant financial pressures that bare on governments' ability to adequately fund causes such as art education. For example, in Canada, significantly aging demographics have placed additional demands on publically-funded health care and have resulted in disproportional and growing expenditure to support this important priority. World-wide, spending related to the climate change-triggered natural disasters and the urgent necessity to search for alternative, clean-energy sources has been further stretching the public purse. Increased security measures required due to the rise of terrorism and the global political instability provide additional examples of causes that have urgently -- and somewhat unexpectedly -- called for public funding support in recent years. As this landscape of growing demands unfolds in the context of the recent globally-felt recession and continuing worrisome economic outlooks, governments will likely be exceptionally frugal and conservative in funding those areas that are not deemed absolutely essential and which are not clearly prioritized by the electorate.

At the same time, the professional art market has been thriving, with artworks selling for record prices. If art education could demonstrate its tangible contributions to the development of artistic talent on the one hand -- and to the development of art patronage that fuels this profitable business, on the other -- perhaps a credible advocacy front could be developed for seeking funding not just from the public purse but also from those who draw dividends from investments in art education? If we are indeed so much connected to the world of art, we ought to be able to draw on this relationship. The challenge of course would be to determine and demonstrate whether and how this connection extends beyond a commonality embedded in the label -- another topic

for research that could help our field. While an earlier limited inquiry (Kindler, 2006) may have not been supportive of this line of argumentation, revealing very tentative, at best, connections between art education and artistic success, the scarceness of such research -- and especially research related to the impact of art education in creating engaged audiences for the arts and in encouraging involvement with the art markets -- suggests that much remains to be discovered in this area.

## Conclusion

The “happily ever after” for art education is unlikely to happen on its own -- or through the power of passion and arguments that grow out and resonate within the field. Successful future of art education will depend, in my view, on a careful consideration of how art education is seen from the outside and what needs to shift within the field in order to re-position it in the context of current societal needs and prerogatives. It will depend on our ability to accept reality of the contemporary circumstance not in a fatalistic fashion but rather as an invitation to mobilize creative imagination and seek approaches and solutions that can bring value and success within our constrained “universe.” And it will require us to learn how to shed the long-standing tradition of our advocacy positioning rooted in a passionate desire to convince others that we are in the right and “convert them” to our cause. It will invite us to embrace a more humble proposition of seeking how we may best be servants to the societal causes that are illuminated perhaps more prominently outside than within the field -- and which we have the capacity and moral mandate to support.

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## 從內與外：探討藝術教育未來永續的可能性

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### 中文提要

1980 年代當我還是一個研究生時修了一門「藝術教育議題」的課程，授課的是當代大師 Kenneth Lansing 教授，這個課程對我影響深遠，奠定我成為藝術教育工作者的基礎。至今我仍牢記該課程中所探討的兩個議題：（1）藝術教育工作者需要對藝術有深刻的理解；（2）強調藝術教育理論反思以堅定信念投身下一代的藝術教育。在 30 年後的今日，這些議題更顯重要，尤其世界各國的藝術教育都在漸漸的被縮減中。

多年來我從一位藝術教育工作者到專業研究者與倡導者，進而成為一所研究型導向大學的資深學術行政領導者，因而能擁有更好的機會來對藝術教育進行反思。在過去職業生涯的轉變中，我得以持續改變我的制高點來重新審視。而我從藝術教育領域內部所建構不免有點狹隘的觀點，也可以直接的與其他領域或也失之狹隘的觀點做比較。

制高點決定視野，並建構感知來判斷事物的重要性與利弊得失，以及詮釋眼前所見。制高點的比喻在藝術教育地位與價值的爭辯具有顯著意義，本文藉以點明藝術教育工作者與其他領域專業者之間認知衝突的緊張，成為數十年來前者挫折的來源。尤其當進行藝術教育於一般課程中之角色、地位，以及經費補助之重要性討論時，常覺得被誤解、被低估與無力感。本文對於藝術教育域內與域外間的兩種不同觀點，加以深刻之體察，有助於藝術教育的推展，與研擬未來研究方向以提供較佳立場加強與外界進行有效對話。什麼是藝術教育中的藝術？藝術教育領域必然包含藝術的概念，然而藝術的定義是混亂而模糊的。傳統藝術教育領域認定的藝術是好的，值得拿來教育下一代，然而現代的藝術卻已經不斷演變，甚至包含許多不道德及殘酷的內容。以往藝術教育領域內的所謂的藝術，只占今日藝術世界的一小部分。

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藝術教育領域無法改變當今藝術的走向，然而仍可站在對公共教育的社會責任上有所作為。教育者應擴展並挑戰社會層面，對於既有信念的挑戰需對領域外觀點心存敬意並做深刻的瞭解。30年前 Lansing 教授課程的反思，現在更為受用，感佩其先見之明，強調要避免模擬兩可，必需提出明確觀點及適當架構，運用操作模式於教學。有何策略可以使藝術教育得到更多實質的公共支持，並減少分歧？我提出五個基本步驟，這是基於個人經驗以領域外觀點，面對包含藝術教育與其他高等教育共同競爭資源分配的行政決策問題，所產生的因應策略。步驟一，澄清主題；步驟二，執行與目的價值一致；步驟三，建立主權宣示的相關性與正當性；步驟四，展示及溝通成果；步驟五，接受今日現實世界並設法從此過著幸福快樂的日子。結語：幸福快樂不會自己發生，必須靠著熱情與論述的力量並與環境產生共鳴。而未來藝術教育要能成功，以我的觀點認為必須考慮領域外的人如何看待藝術教育，同時也在領域內依據現有社會需求與權威，作相應的調整。這不應認為是一種宿命論，寧可視為是發揮創造想像以尋求價值與成功的一種邀請。

**關鍵詞：**宣傳、藝術教育、課程、理論基礎、持續性