

Can the “Best Practice” Trend Leave Room for the Unknown?

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ABSTRACT As teachers of the arts we are committed to nurturing the creative potential of all our students. We value process and want to inspire young artists to find their unique voices. But do we? Habitual models of teaching, along with external pressures in the settings in which we teach—including pursuing models and language of “best practice” borrowed from the business world—can lead us away from those central values and toward a more teacher-centered, outcome-directed approach that might unintentionally limit our students’ agency in making art. Learner autonomy in the arts—qualities of which include confidence in navigating the unknown, the ability to look at one’s work more deeply, and the capacity to independently sustain one’s artistic creation through often unpredictable progressions—is an overarching goal for us. Our challenge is to pursue that goal, and share our processes with others with similar goals, remaining cognizant of the risks of adopting “best practice” concepts and jargon.

A visual artist we know described his struggle teaching elementary school children to draw. After modeling the use of materials, he watched as students re-created, with slight variation, the lines, shapes, and subject matter he had meant to offer as mere examples. “Do you know what I really want?” he asked. “I want them to make their own line.” Although the art form we teach is dance, the metaphor—having children “make their own line”—touched a nerve. Our friend had identified a dilemma we, too, had faced: When we want our students to do things in their own way—not “our” way—how do we step aside to let that happen?

When an artist-teacher chooses to grapple with this question, a new part of the teaching journey, filled with unknowns for both teacher and student, begins. These unknowns bring teachers face-to-face with deep and often troubling questions about structure, planning, pedagogy, tradition, and independence. Recognizing the tensions within these questions can be both painful and liberating. How, when pushed to identify predictable outcomes and the tools to measure them, can one allow for the unpredictable life of art and learning and make space for those voices? How, too, to make space for one’s own autonomous voice as a teacher?

In more than 30 years working in dance education and professional development for teachers in the arts and general education, we have seen more new initiatives, standards, guidelines, toolboxes, blueprints, methods, systems, approaches, and best practices than our shelves can hold. All contain potentially useful ideas and guidance for both beginning and experienced teachers. But most, individually and certainly cumulatively, ignore fundamental aspects of artistic development for both teachers and students. Intentionally or unintentionally, initiatives imposed from above and presented as reforms expect compliance, assume common, often unexamined values, and require teachers to constantly rebalance their intuitive artistic responses with the demands of new, “improved” practices. All too often, such practices contradict the emergent, variable, delicate growth of art and artists.

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We are not suggesting that dance teachers are unable to define and articulate goals for students' development in their various programs or that a study of excellent practices is irrelevant to the goal of improvement for teachers. We do, however, propose that externally imposed practices that emphasize procedure over context do not tend to help teachers deepen their practice and often undermine their ability to respond effectively to their students in their particular setting.

The term *best practices* comes primarily from the medical, law, technology, and business professions (Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde 1998), where its intention is to implement dependable methods by which to re-create excellent outcomes: better results for patients, for clients, and for products and profits. Empirical data and uniform evaluation methods can test whether goals are reached and point the way toward next steps for improvement. In education and in art, however—where desired outcomes are not uniform; where acceptance of diverse processes, language, and aesthetics is essential; and where empirical data might not be the most effective way to measure many aspects of learning—the notion of “bestness” could negatively affect teachers who are already under extraordinary pressure to conform. Efforts to objectify and measure learning and art can lead to practices that contradict teachers' own stated values and obscure the capabilities students bring into a specific classroom or studio.

Even in the business world, the focus on best practices has been questioned, especially in areas that require creativity and responsiveness. Writing about the development of computer software, Kaner and Bach (2013) distinguished between a context-aware and a context-driven approach. Although many proponents of best practices and standards-based educational reforms are aware of the importance of context, the starting point of practice and standard turns attention away from the individual needs and abilities of the teacher and students. A context-driven approach, by contrast, takes as its starting point the individuals and setting. It then employs assessment to evaluate what actually happens, as opposed to simply measuring progress toward the predetermined goal. As Kaner and Bach put it, “context-driven testers reject the notion of best practices, because they present certain practices as appropriate independent of context” (1). Others in business and medicine complain that the label of best practice leads to self-perpetuating myths (“everybody does it this way”) that stifle questioning and accurate assessment (Vermeulen 2012).

The obstacles for teachers are, by no means, only external. Internalized models of teaching, the impulse to instruct and guide, and the wish to take students beyond where they believed they could go are powerful inner drives that can prompt a teacher to exert control even when she wants to step back, and to direct when really she wants to observe and listen. By facing these internal and external forces and recognizing their effects on students and themselves, dance teachers can lay claim to their own practice. They need support, however, for their intuitive, responsive,

artistic teaching capacities equal to or greater than the pressure they experience for compliance, standardization, and accountability.

AUTONOMY, ARTISTRY, AND POWER

Autonomous individuals go beyond compliance and instead display a self-motivated, questioning approach to their own learning. John Dewey (1897/1964) described a school's ethical responsibility to train a student to have “such possession of himself that he may take charge of himself; may not only adapt himself to the changes which are going on, but have power to shape and direct those changes” (114).

Teaching for autonomy is complicated. Although focused on the individual, learner autonomy develops and is practiced in social settings (Bruner 1961; Vygotsky 1986); although it suggests choice and intrinsic motivation, it also requires support from external sources, sources whose power and influence by nature threaten independence. An overemphasis on extrinsic rewards and punishments also threatens autonomy and limits creativity (Amabile 1996). The uneven power relationship between students and teachers, as between teachers and administrators, and among administrators, politicians, school boards, and testing companies, puts the emphasis squarely on extrinsic rewards and punishments. Psychologist and educator Seymour Sarason often said, “You cannot create the conditions for change if they do not exist for you” (personal communication, April 17, 2009). One of the challenges of teaching others about autonomous learning is that it does not lend itself to recipe or formula. “Autonomy can't be the same thing for everyone,” wrote Murphey (2003), as “deciding for others how they should manage or teach autonomy is anti-autonomous” (7).

Artistry, similarly, requires the power to bring one's unique vision to bear on whatever field of endeavor one chooses. In dance, the choreographer—like a playwright or a composer in other performing arts—is often considered the “creator.” But the development of artistry in dance includes the dancer as well as the choreographer, and can be nurtured in all types of dance classes from technique to improvisation and composition. Teaching, too, is an artistic practice. When students and teachers bring autonomy and artistry together, they create a productive environment in which individuals are active, curious, risk-taking, and reflective, regardless of specific content, task, or role.

True learner autonomy might be the last thing a teacher has in mind when she wants her students to follow, obey, or replicate. When, however, she voices frustration that students do not take imaginative risks, “own” their work, or approach tasks with sustained enthusiasm, it is likely that the conditions for autonomy and artistry have not been established. If the teacher herself lacks a sense of personal ownership, motivation, and originality, she undoubtedly faces nonautonomous and inartistic conditions, and would be hard pressed to create such an environment for her students. The conventions by which teachers teach, practical

and effective to reach some goals, can work against the qualities that comprise some of the most delightful and surprising features of teaching dance.

DEVELOPING AN ARTISTIC STANCE

Students are artists before they enter the dance class, possessing an innate consciousness of artistic form. For us, this principle is the foundation of our relationship with students and shapes our actions with them from the beginning. We do not address their artistry later, after preliminary instruction in abstract concepts and forms separate from their own lived experience. Instead, we involve students in determining the content and the form of classes in which we guide and cocreate, constantly interacting with and being changed by our students' perspectives.

This kind of teaching is a stance more than a method. It is rigorous, time-consuming, and highly resistant to the use of formulaic procedure. This stance respects the capacities of teachers and students alike and expects all to behave as artists—learning to pose meaningful questions, discover interests, pursue provocative problems, and work collaboratively in the unknown territory of artistic creation. Goals and learning objectives become fluid and developmental rather than fixed, predetermined, and outcome-oriented.

When a student or teacher challenges a topic, an approach, or the criteria specified in a rubric, this stance encourages self-questioning. “How have I defined ‘dance’ for others? Are there other perceptions in the room? What problems are my students interested in pursuing, even if they differ from the ones I—or the field—said were important? What messages do I send about what is worthy or unworthy? And how did my students either fit themselves in or remain left out entirely while I wasn’t looking?” A teacher’s sense of autonomy and agency in considering and answering these questions will define to a great extent whether she can hear, respond to, and support the independence of her students and their ongoing desire to learn.

In adopting such a stance, teachers make themselves vulnerable. The inner voice saying “Trust yourself and trust your students” must be as strong as the chorus of voices saying “Do it just like this” or “If you don’t cover this material today you will never catch up” or “This is going to be a disaster.” To evaluate the situation in light of a plan and to conceive of alternatives and appraise their relevance to central goals, a teacher must have the confidence to make her choices work in the moment. It is the same process as making art. All teachers have experienced a highly successful class followed by one that feels like a failure, using the same lesson plan. The key is not simply knowing “what works.” A responsive stance helps maintain the flexibility to figure out *when* and *how* to use a practice in different, and ever-changing, contexts. As Eisner (1967) wrote, there are an infinite number of combinations and sequences for any curricular plan. “The variable teacher, students, class group require artful blending for the educational valuable to occur” (90).

INTO THE UNKNOWN

Having worked together extensively in schools, arts organizations, and colleges for three decades, in the last ten years we have been researching how a central focus on learner autonomy can affect students and teachers in different settings, from large elementary school classes, to small, studio-based improvisation and choreography classes, to undergraduate and graduate dance and education courses (Nicoll and Oreck 2012; Oreck and Nicoll 2010). Seminal writers in education, psychology, and the arts, most notably Seymour Sarason, John Dewey, Henry Schaefer-Simmern, Lev Vygotsky, and Elliot Eisner, prodded us to question whether we were going far enough to open the door to students’ independent artistic vision and development.

The psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1971) said, “The act of artistic creation cannot be taught” (256), and described the teacher’s role as a cooperative one that would help students “organize the conscious processes in such a way that they generate subconscious processes” (257). The visual artist and teacher Henry Schaefer-Simmern, in his groundbreaking work *The Unfolding of Artistic Activity* (1948), demonstrated ways a teacher can help an individual open and maintain a dialogue between conscious and subconscious processes that he saw as key to the artist’s progress through subsequent stages of development. He described the teacher’s job as facilitating the individual’s “awakening” to his or her inherent abilities. Schaefer-Simmern’s meticulously documented examples of his students’ artistic growth (1948; 2003) provide a striking demonstration of how a rigorous focus on independent choice-making can engage students deeply in their own creative process. Sarason (1999) wrote of him, “He knew his subject matter well enough to know when, where, or why the individual may encounter difficulties. . . . He trusted and encouraged the person to think about, study, and judge what he or she had done” (93).

We had always considered ourselves to be responsive, “student-centered” teachers, but we began to focus more deliberately on the subtle and obvious ways our influence on students is expressed: the questions we ask and those students ask, how we communicate what is important through our feedback and assessment, and how we help students engage in their own dialogue with themselves and their work.

ENCOURAGING STUDENT QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Teachers communicate their values to students in many ways. Working with any age group, we often begin by asking students to contemplate and name their goals and to identify what they must do to achieve those goals. This tells students they are capable of identifying their interests and participating in goal-setting with teachers to create a context for productive learning. Making this invitation—and listening to, or reading, each student’s response—also tells students in concrete and meaningful terms that they have agency and that time will be made for it.

Openings for student agency appear regularly, but if the fabric of a class is woven too tightly—adhering unbendingly to a neat curricular calendar or letting fear of administrators’ judgments drive goals—teachers may be distanced from their own instincts and miss rich opportunities. While not every idea can be accommodated, a single freely stated question or desire can shift the motivation for every student in a group. “Could we do it backward?” said Carlos during a class Nicoll was leading in a New York City public school. Nicoll paused; the class had started almost ten minutes late and the rhythmically challenging pattern was already complicated enough for the 20 fourth graders. Taking Carlos up on his offer was a risk—where was he going with this?—and would mean altering the lesson plan. Seeing Carlos’s excitement, however, she said, “Sure, how would we do that?” thinking he might suggest the class face upstage. Instead, Carlos said, “I guess we’d start with the last part” and he began to mark through the sequence in reverse. His classmates’ expressions revealed both fear and eagerness. “OK, let’s give it a try,” Nicoll announced. “Now?” Carlos said, eyes wide. “Yes,” she said. “Right now.” Carlos had created an opening into the unknown and the rest, including the teacher, had followed. Soon Carlos’s classmates bubbled over with “What if we . . . ?” Nicoll wrote their ideas in her notebook, crediting each child, and made space for their ideas throughout the residency. Small encouragements and the underlying statement of respect for students’ artistic visions have a powerful effect. Although at times it seems Pandora’s box has opened as student ideas spill out, the problem of managing and responding to too many ideas is a far better one than struggling to get a group of passive students to speak up.

Some say a student like Carlos is an exception, that most students lack imaginative ideas, and that a teacher should intervene with suggestions. That belief assumes that all but the exceptional are not capable. Dewey (1916) warned that believing this will make it true—and will ensure mediocrity (396). If the teacher consistently fills the space with her ideas, students will wait for the prompt they’ve learned to expect. Eliciting and trying students’ suggestions is a step into the unknown and a powerful motivator for students to volunteer more ideas, often with surprising results.

Many professional artists describe the ability to step into the unknown—following a motion or an idea where it leads and reflecting on it to see what it tells them—as essential to meaningful creation in art. Meredith Monk says, “Part of the process is hanging out in the unknown. . . . I’m excited that I don’t know what the form is going to be when I start” (cited in Morgenroth 2004, 91). “I never plan a dance,” Anna Sokolow said. “I do it, look at it, and then say: ‘Yes, I see what I am trying to do’” (cited in Cohen 1965, 35). This ability to embrace the unknown and trust action, observation, and reflection, stands in marked contrast to how fiercely students are often pointed away from the unknown. Teachers’ attempts to demystify the artistic process, offering simplified procedures or step-by-step recipes along with

clear, efficient evaluation criteria, can undermine some of the most essential aspects of artistic development.

FOLLOWING CONVENTIONS

The conventions of teaching choreography at the university level have been followed since Doris Humphrey and Margaret H’Doubler laid out their approaches to composition in the middle of the last century. In a manner consistent with the traditions of Western postindustrial education, in which a whole is systematically broken into parts, educators embraced the teaching of discrete elements of artistic form. This conceptual foundation persists to this day, not only in university education but throughout K–12 dance education, and contains a host of assumptions about dance-making as a creative act. The following statement typifies the approach and a frequently assumed result: “When the dance educator has developed and communicated the abstract concepts underlying each lesson using clear descriptive language, the students will have a greater understanding of how to apply the concepts and create meaningful dance works” (Kranicke and Pruitt 2012, 114). Although the goal of developing analytic skills using a particular model of analysis might be achieved in this way, the final claim about meaningful artistic creation is not sufficiently supported. John A. Rice described the tendency in education to try to “reverse creation.” “Some analyzer,” he writes, “says in effect, ‘If you see how it is done you can do it yourself,’ which is an error in every field except the scientific” (Rice 1937, 593). Where is the evidence that conceptual analysis and a predetermined sequence lead to meaningful art-making for all, or even many, students across the spectrum, including a young Anna Sokolow? This approach has become a “best practice” almost by default, so deeply embedded in dance education that few even consider questioning it.

Some teachers have raised significant questions about how to teach choreography in educational settings. Theresa Purcell Cone (2009) pondered traditions of teaching creative dance to children to which she had long subscribed and dared to ask herself, “Did I halt students’ creative processes when I offered suggestions for topics, changing movements or choreographic structures to make the dance what I thought . . . more aesthetically significant?” (82). Purcell Cone’s willingness and freedom to experiment opened up new understandings about creativity for herself and for her students. The learning was hard won, requiring her to control impulses to suggest, to lead, or to “fix” her students’ work. Instead she dove into the unknown with them—a very difficult place for anyone, perhaps particularly a teacher, to enter.

Larry Lavender’s *Dancers Talking Dance* (1996) offers an eloquent argument against using predetermined criteria to judge or drive choreographic process. Lavender’s thorough and forward-thinking writing on this topic speaks to his own autonomy as an artist and teacher as well as to his belief in his students’ capabilities. Even Lavender, however, puts beginners in a different category. Like many others, Lavender

(2006) maintains that beginning students should first learn tools of analysis and “apply basic concepts of and templates for dance design (ABA, round and canon . . . and so forth)” (7). This starting point is said to prevent frustration (for both students and teachers), foster artistic development, and provide sufficient grounding in the aesthetics of dance. Later it is reasoned, when they are advanced, students will be able to formulate their own artistic problems. It is difficult to unhook from assumptions about what people—including children and the “untrained”—are capable of and about what tools and information teachers must provide before students will be capable. These assumptions profoundly affect teachers’ judgments as well as their subsequent actions. For example, discussing frustrations faced by some choreography students, Lavender describes as a “basic fact” that they “do not really know until it is pointed out to them what parts or aspects of the work are found to be artistically vivid, exciting, dull, redundant, or anything else” (7). He also questions whether a student who has, by her teacher’s judgment, accidentally “backed into” her work’s aesthetic strengths should be credited with making an artistic choice or showing evidence of “genuine learning” (7).

The implications—that a student requires a teacher to identify the merits of his or her work and that knowing at a subconscious level is not true “knowing”—conflict with two observations from our experience: (a) given the space and time to study what they have done, students are not only capable of identifying their works’ strengths and weaknesses but will have a deeper understanding of them than if their teacher’s verdict precedes their own, and (b) subconscious processes that defy verbal analysis or rationalization are vitally important aspects of artistic choice-making and can be stifled by premature efforts at explanation. Bill T. Jones has described the way a dance can “arise.” “There are propositions,” he said, “coming from both my mind and my muscles. . . . I follow them and something comes out that makes me think, ‘Whoa! Where did that come from?’” (cited in Morgenroth 2004, 144).

The contradictions in Lavender’s writings reveal the depth of hidden assumptions about judgment and expertise, as well as the difficulty in wrestling with one’s own expectations when students struggle or don’t “get” what one *wants* them to get. If teachers do not allow students to struggle with their own problems and support the search for their own solutions they deny students the opportunity to develop crucial artistic skills.

Phyllis Lamhut, a choreographer and mentor to many contemporary choreographers, describes her role as “stabilizing the discomfort. I try to encourage artists to revisit their work—to not run away from their work quickly” (personal communication, March 3, 2009). Rather than offering her opinion or suggesting a solution, she encourages choreographers to dialogue with their own work. This process of dialogue with self and the work is essential not only for professional choreographers, but for students at all stages of development.

FINDING YOUR OWN ANSWERS AND QUESTIONS

Dialogue must begin with something. The mistake is to assume students enter with nothing. In professional development workshops, we sometimes hear teachers describe students as not experienced or knowledgeable enough to take independent action or pursue their own ideas. “They don’t know what they want,” many teachers say. “Their ideas won’t work.” When asked, “How will they know?” the answer is often, “First I need to tell (or show) them.” Here is a moment to pause and step back. Encouraging students to uncover their own questions and ideas, and giving them the space and time to do so, challenges both teachers and students. Finding ways to help students turn on to what they *do* know—or *want* to know—deep inside can prompt a curiosity that takes students much farther than the answers a teacher has already worked out for them. It can also take teachers into surprising, sometimes uncomfortable new territory.

Nicoll felt uncertain watching one teenage choreographer’s first efforts, which reflected her intensive gymnastic training. Taking notes, trying to stay alert to new stages of development that she could reinforce through guided reflection and by introducing relevant resources, Nicoll agonized over whether to directly address the dancer’s movement habits or offer solutions to the problems she perceived. She forced herself to not suggest changes to the developing piece. She videotaped the student’s process, made notes of the student’s questions, and guided group response sessions. After two months, the unique choreographic voice that had emerged surprised the choreographer as well as her classmates and she remarked on new understandings about her process. Reflecting later, the student said:

I am really intrigued by how all dancers tend to revert to a particular type of movement or specific gesture when they “get stuck.” I had such “default movements” that I would frequently incorporate into improvisations, phrases, and full pieces. However, I found that I was most satisfied with my choreography when I was able to transcend the boundaries of my usual vocabulary and experiment with movement that was truly new for me. (Oreck and Nicoll 2010, 115)

It is impossible to know whether this young choreographer’s voice would have emerged (or been silenced) with a more directive approach. What stands out in this reflection is the student’s discovery: an awareness that pushing beyond her own boundaries was *to her* the most satisfying aspect of her artistic growth. Although a more efficient route might be to assign a compositional task to break the student’s habits, such a practice contradicts what our research has revealed about learner autonomy and artistic development. In interviews with students and parents, we found that students of all ages, backgrounds, experiences, and interests in dance demonstrated increased motivation and self-direction when development of artistic processes and the criteria by which students observe and develop their work originate

with them. As one undergraduate student said, after making a change in her work based on an adviser's suggestion, "It looked good. But," she added, "it ate me up inside. So I changed it. And that was good too—only better, because I found it" (personal communication, October 11, 2012).

LEARNING OR ACHIEVING

Writer Marilyn French (1985) noted, "Only extraordinary education is concerned with learning, most is concerned with *achieving*; and for young minds, these two are very nearly opposites" (387). When the focus is achieving rather than learning, teacher and student attention is inevitably drawn to predetermined outcomes and simplified measurement. The pressure for assessable outcomes leads to assessments that ask only "Are our students getting what we want them to get?" without asking "What are they getting and what can we learn from what we see?"

In an effort to create valid assessments for dance in education, new rubrics are continually being designed to measure students' artistic creations. One recently published rubric attempting to rank originality in students' use of space justifiably argued that the highest ranking could not be described, as it would exceed a teacher's expectations and ability to name it in advance (Kranicke and Pruitt 2012, 116). Lesser achievement in originality, the authors claimed, could be ranked according to how much space dancers used. An intriguing notion: (a) quantity determines quality; (b) if you turn in amazing work we can't define it; mediocre though—*that* we can score. We are reminded of a friend, a visual artist and teacher, who stood before a painting at an outsider art exhibit marveling at an unconventional, dynamic creation that featured a figure in one small corner of a large canvas. "If one of my students had turned that in," she said, "I'd have said he should use the whole page." She was shocked at the limits of her own perspective. Inappropriately applying quantifiable measures of disconnected elements when assessing artistic creation and process restricts our perceptions, promotes choreography by checklist, and serves our students neither artistically nor educationally.

A dance specialist with a keen focus on students' learning worked with Nicoll in a 12-week mentorship program in a K–5 public school. She loved seeing what made her young students tick and was alert to subtle and dramatic shifts in students' energy and attention. The program gave her an opportunity to observe first-grade students closely, as she and Nicoll traded off teaching and watching. Early in the residency the specialist described a long list of expectations the school had for her. In addition to filling her studio with word walls and learning objectives and procedural charts, she was expected to make links to various curricular areas and complete forms aligning lessons with mandated standards. As she filled out the forms each week, slotting in the appropriate standard number with each section of the lesson plan, she often sighed and said, "Nobody actually looks at this."

One afternoon the specialist whispered sheepishly, "Don't tell, but I taught my little ones 'Koo Koo' last week. They're supposed to be creating their own dances, but you should have seen how they came alive." The dance specialist clearly doubted her own autonomy to revise the curricular calendar and honestly share with her principal what she observed in her particular students' range of needs and abilities. Her admission revealed quiet courage and yet her insecurity in the face of administrative oversight was very familiar. Often when the authors describe teachers' anxieties to their supervisors, administrators maintain that their guidelines were misunderstood; certainly a teacher can make her own choices. Whether intentionally or not, administrators participate in an environment not of autonomy, but of obedience. Of course, they, too, are under pressure to achieve. In the current educational climate, teachers' and administrators' jobs in both K–12 and higher education (particularly in the arts) are at risk based on externally imposed criteria. The personal agency essential to quality teaching must be intentionally and fiercely nurtured to counteract the powerlessness teachers understandably feel.

CONCLUSION

The dilemma—how to be an artful teacher, incorporating useful new ideas and approaches with consciousness rather than compliance—challenges all committed teachers. It is ever harder to maintain a sense of autonomy and artistry against the backdrop of an educational system dominated by business-based models and the language of efficiency, standardization, accountability, data, and competition. The definitive nature of the word *best* and the mandate behind it privilege external authority over internal expertise and can force a teacher who questions the suitability of a declared "best practice" into an untenable position. Teachers become cynical, knowing that the next new thing is right around the corner.

Ironically, many "best practices" promote student-centered theory while imposing teacher-directed procedures. The implication of arrival ("got it, it works, do it again") and competition ("this is better than what you were doing") contradicts the goal of responsiveness and continual growth that sustains the most vital aspects of teaching and learning.

There are no simple shortcuts to improving teaching. The tasks are enormous: finding measures that more accurately reflect what aspects of art can be assessed with integrity, establishing classroom communities that support both individuality and collaboration, and empowering teachers and students to think, question, and take control of their own learning.

Sue Stinson (2005) wrote, "Think how different school might be if we taught poetry, other arts, and even math and science, as a source of delight and wisdom instead of something more akin to medicine one has to take in order to meet externally imposed standards" (88). Only by treating

teaching as an art form requiring intuition, adaptation, and the ability to navigate the unknown will we uncover our own—and our students’—delight and wisdom.

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